THE

CHRISTIAN FRIEND

And Instructor.

PAPERS FOR THE COMFORT AND EDIFICATION OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD.

A. S. ROUSE, 15 & 16, PATERNOSTER SQUARE, LONDON, E.C.

1894.

[&]quot;Hold fast the form of sound words,"-2 Tim, i, 13.

[&]quot;Exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."—HEB. X. 25.

[&]quot;Building up yourselves on your most holy faith."-JUDE 20.

CONTENTS.

PAUL IN ATHENS THE ALTAR OF INCENSE GOD'S NEW COMMENCEMENT

THE WORLD AND THE LOVE OF GOD

NECTION WITH WORSHIP . "THE NIGHT IS FAR SPENT".

THE REMNANT IN JUDE

CHRIST IN GETHSEMANE

READINGS AT CROYDON-

CALEB THE SON OF JEPHUNNEH

THE CHARGE TO THE ELDERS OF EPHESUS THE OPPRESSOR AND THE SAVIOUR

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER ON 2 CORINTHIANS

"JOHN DAPTIST'S HEAD IN A CHARGER"

U. CHRIST FORMED IN YOU III. PART WITH ME

HINDRANCES TO A CHRISTIAN LIFE

I. RESURRECTION

IV. THE WILDERNESS V. THE HEAD

VI. UNION WITH CHRIST

"BEHOLD, UPON THE FACE OF THE WILDERNESS!"

PAGE

73

76 85

91

99

113 120

125

130 135

141

204 253

281 309

. 169

105

THE HOLY CITY, NEW JE	RUSALEM				24
PAUL AT CORINTH .			•		29
solomon's porch .					37
A LETTER ON DEALING W	TH SOULS				45
THE CONSTRUCTION OF TI	IE TABERN	ACLE			48
EXPERIENCES AT EPHESUS	· .				57
PHILEMON .					63
NOTES OF A LECTURE					68

"THE ABSTRACT;" OR, THE NEED OF ABSTRACTION IN CON-

"LET US KEEP T	HE FEAS	r".			155
"LET YOUR YEA	BE YEA	AND YOUL	NAY, 1	YAY"	160
CHRIST OUR MOT	IVE				183
THE BELIEVER "	GUIDING	HIS HANDS	s WITTIN	GLY"	188
THE ELECT LADY			•		197
A READING					217
THE ROADS TO G	AZA AND	DAMASCUS			225
THE SERVANT OF	GOD IN	A DAY OF	FAILURE		229

CONTENTS.

iv

. 234 THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE ASSEMBLY TWO ASPECTS OF THE MEAT OFFERING . . 239 "THE GOD OF PEACE" . 243 THE PASSOVER-PILGRIMS AND PEACE .

. 267 . 272 THE REMNANT . 297 . 324

SONGS OF DEGREES . THE INTERCESSION OF CHRIST POETRY-"THE LOVE OF CHRIST WHICH PASSETH KNOWLEDGE" 35

. . 79 MOSES ON PISCAII . THE LORD'S COMING . . "WHOM SAY YE THAT I AM?" .

. 108 132 DIVINE LOVE. 165 "THE FATHER LOVETH THE SON" . 196

THE SOUL'S RESPONSE . . 224 "PLEASURES FOR EVERMORE" . . 278

. 330 MARY SCRIPTURE NOTES-

26, 53, 81, 109, 135, 166, 192, 223, 249, 279, 304

FRAGMENTS 28, 277

THE CHRISTIAN FRIEND.

PAUL IN ATHENS.

Acts xvii. 15-34.

From Philippi the apostle, with his companions, went,

by way of Amphipolis and Apollonia, to Thessalonica, Combining the record of his visit to this city with the two epistles to the saints there, it is abundantly evident that he found an open door for the preaching of the gospel, and that, to quote his own words, "our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." consequence was, that there were many converts; and the rescue of so many of his captives aroused all the enmity of Satan, so that he stirred up a persecution against the Lord's servants through the unbelieving Jews. The brethren therefore deemed it expedient to send away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea, where, undaunted by the opposition they had encountered at Thessalonica, they immediately commenced to proclaim their message. Here also the Spirit of God wrought with and through them; for "these" (the Jews in Berea) "were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed."

2

Nothing is more wonderful than the way in which God is pleased oftentimes to accomplish His purposes. Although success of no ordinary kind was vouchsafed to the ministry of the gospel at Berea, the apostle's stay in the city was almost immediately interrupted by the hostility of his enemies, who followed him from Thessalonica, "and stirred up the people." To human eyes, it might seem as if the enemies of the gospel had succeeded in hindering the work by causing the cessation of Paul's labours; but once again they were but instrumental in the spread of the glad tidings in other regions. Happy the servant who is so will-less as to see the Lord's hand in all his varying circumstances, and who is able to discern His mind in everything that springs up in his path. Driven away from Berea, "they that conducted Paul brought him unto Athens; and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus for to come to him with all speed, they departed."

It is a remarkable thing that the apostle's mind does not appear to have been intent upon service in Athens. Even in his coming to the place, those who accompanied him seem to have governed his destination; and now that he has arrived, instead of at once commencing to preach the word, as at Thessalonica and Berea, he waited for Silas and Timotheus. Had he left Berea with reluctance? We cannot tell; but one thing is certain, and that is, that the servant is often in danger of being governed by his affections rather than by the Lord's will. None but the servant knows the strength of the bond which unites him to his converts, and consideration for them and for their welfare, will often

detain him in a place long after he should have departed. Whether Paul longed to return to Berea cannot now be ascertained, but it is evident that his advent in Athens differs much from his arrival at other places. However this might have been, the Lord was really controlling His devoted servant, and He wrought upon his spirit, and prepared him for his new work, in His own way.

The apostle's heart became burdened, while he waited for Silas and Timotheus; "his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry." There was not indeed a city in the world so crowded with idols of every kind as Athens; and the skill of the most renowned sculptors and architects had contributed to invest the objects of their worship with every form of beauty which the mind of man could devise. What remains of their work excites even now the wonder and admiration of the world. As has been written by one well acquainted with the subject, "Every public place and building was likewise a sanctuary. The Record-House was a temple of the mother of the gods. The Council-House held statues of Apollo and Jupiter, with an altar of Vesta. . . . And as if the imagination of the Attic mind knew no bounds in this direction, abstractions were deified and publicly honoured. Altars were erected to Fame, to Modesty, to Energy, to Persuasion, and to Pity." This extract will enable us the better to understand why it was that Paul's spirit "was painfully excited" within him as he beheld the innumerable objects of worship with which the Athenians had filled and adorned their city.

4

Thus wrought upon, undoubtedly by a sense of the dishonour done to God by those who had "changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts," as well as by yearning pity over the poor slaves of Satan who had been so terribly deluded, the word of God became as a fire in his bones, and he could no longer withhold his testimony. The Spirit of God calls attention to this effect by the word "therefore"-"therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him." He began with the Jews and proselytes, who rejected idol worship equally with Paul, but who, while witnesses for the unity of the Godhead, refused, alas! God's testimony to Christ as the Messiah; and working outwards from this centre he "reasoned" with every one that daily crossed his path in the great place of public concourse.

Whether there were fruit to this ministry is not revealed, for the Spirit of God passes on to call attention to the main purpose and characteristic of the apostle's visit to Athens. The fame of the Greek schools of philosophy had spread throughout the then known world, so that Athens was regarded as the seat of learning and wisdom. What Cambridge and Oxford are to England to-day, Athens was then to the whole of Europe; and hence it is plainly written in this record, what Paul afterwards proclaimed, that the world by wisdom knew not God. The Epicureans and Stoics were pre-eminent among the Athenian schools; and the ambassador of Christ came into contact and conflict with certain of their philosophers.

Their very names have found an abiding place in our language, and they represent, as has been strikingly said, *Pleasure* and *Pride*—the two most powerful factors of human life. Encountering Paul, some of them said, "What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection."

Possessing, as we do, the full light of revelation we can the more easily estimate the darkness of the natural mind. The most eminent teachers of that day were so benighted that they thought the resurrection, which Paul preached in connection with Jesus of Nazareth, was also a strange god! But, like all the Athenians, filled with curiosity, for they "spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing," they took Paul, and brought him unto Areopagus, and requested that they might hear more of his new doctrine. "The place to which they took him was the summit of the hill of Areopagus, where the most awful court of judicature had sat from time immemorial, to pass sentence on the greatest criminals, and to decide the most solemn questions connected with religion. . . . On this spot a long series of awful causes, connected with crime and religion, had been determined, beginning with the legendary trial of Mars, which gave to the place its name of Mars' Hill."* On such a spot, surrounded by "temples, statues, and altars," stood the apostle on this memorable day to address the most illustrious sages of the world.

[·] The Life and Epistles of Paul, by Conybeane and Howson.

the wisdom of God. It must be remembered however, in reading it, that what we have recorded is not, as another has said, Paul's preaching, but his defence. He had preached "Jesus, and the resurrection" to the Athenians (v. 18); now he descends to their own level, becoming all things to all men, in order to lead them up to the truth of God's creatorship of the world, and their consequent responsibility to Him-a responsibility which God would finally deal with in a future day of judgment. First of all, with divine skill, as taught of the Spirit, Paul acknowledged the great "religiousness" of his hearers; and then he proceeded to take the text of his discourse from an inscription on one of their own altars, which thus read, "To the unknown God." Having recited it, he cried, "Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you." Surely the audience must have been spellbound under this "babbler's" divinely-chosen words. Accustomed to hear the most renowned orators, they were now listening to one who spake in words taught of the Holy Ghost, and, natural men as they were, they must have felt the difference. Having affirmed the creatorship of God, and His

Having affirmed the creatorship of God, and His sovereignty over heaven and earth, he proceeded to declare His spiritual nature, and that, being what He was, He did not dwell in temples made with hands (thus condemning in one sentence all the magnificent buildings which were the boast and pride of Athens), and that, as the Fount and Source of life, breath, and all things, God was a Giver rather than a

Receiver. He moreover proclaimed the unpalatable truth-unpalatable to many even in this "enlightened age"-that God hath made of one blood all nations of men, and that He had determined the time of their existence, as well as the bounds of their habitation. Next he supported his statement that all men owe their existence and sustainment in life to God, by a quotation from one of their own poets; and he founded upon it an unanswerable exposure of the folly of idolatry. Lastly, he told them, in burning words, that God, having long borne with men's ignorance, commanded now all men everywhere to repent, in view of the already appointed day of judgment, when that Jesus, whom he had preached, would judge the world in righteousness; and that "the proof of it" had been given in the fact of His having been raised from the dead.

Such is the outline, and perhaps in the chapter itself, it is no more than an outline, of this wonderful address. The effect as usual was diverse in different souls. Some mocked; others postponed their consideration of the truth brought before them; but certain men believed, one of whom is named Dionysius the Areopagite, and there was also a woman named Damaris, besides others. But there is no mention of the formation of any assembly, nor any record of any subsequent visit of the apostle to this city. Human culture and intelligence are not favourable to the doctrines of grace. To the poor the gospel is preached; and in every age it has been true that "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called."

THE ALTAR OF INCENSE, &c.

Exodus xxx.

WE have noticed the double character of worship connected with the brazen and golden altars, and also that communications were made to Moses from those two places; for though the golden altar was outside the vail, yet its position was before the mercy-seat, where God met with the mediator. No doubt the service of the golden altar was primarily in respect of Israel. Christ Himself is the antitype to that altar, as to all else in the tabernacle, and His perfect desires for that people will yet be accomplished—they will yet be the vessel of light in His hand. But as those who are of the priestly family, we are privileged to draw near, and to enter into the desires of Christ as now expressed while intercession for Israel is in abeyance. We listen to these desires for "His own" in John xvii. We are privileged to enter into the breathings which went up to the Father-His first thought the Father's glory; but that glory in deepest grace bound up with the Son, making Him known to us. Then the Father's words given to His own that they might take the place in the world of being for Him, sanctified by the truth of the Father's word.

Testimony and communion go together. The incense was burnt when the lamps were dressed and lighted. And again in verse 36 the incense beaten small was placed before the testimony, where the Lord met with Moses to speak to him. The fragrance of the incense was connected with the communications there made. How blessed that there is One who has much more

than answered to the feeble shadow. In Him were thoughts, and feelings, and desires which were those of the Son who was ever in the bosom of the Father, and which as perfections in a Man can be and were expressed to God His Father, and all based upon the glorifying of God by His own accomplished work. It is feebly that we can speak of the inexpressible delight of God in the perfections of Christ; but this blessed One is the word of life to us. so that we should have communion with and know these perfections better, and be witnesses for Him as growing up in His nature. The church, as the holy Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God, will fulfil the desires expressed by the Lord in John xvii. 22, 23. It will be the vessel of light through which the glory of the heavenly will shine upon the earth. The words, "And the Lord spake unto Moses" (v. 11), begin another detail of the service, which was henceforth to be associated with the tabernacle and priesthood. The sum of the children of Israel is to be taken. The details of the numbering are given in the early chapters of the book of Numbers. God's pleasure is to register His people, whether for earth or heaven. The latter are referred to in Hebrews xii. 23, as "the Church of the first-born which are written in heaven," while Psalm lxxxvii, 6 speaks of the former, "the people," written by Jehovah as born of Zion. In our present chapter we have the registry of those whom He had redeemed and brought out of Egypt. Every one is numbered, for the Lord has a personal interest in each. That is the Lord's side of it, but on the people's side there must be the acknowledgment, that only on the ground of atonement could each one be counted as amongst His people. And here there is no

difference between rich or poor, all are equally on the same ground; each acknowledges by his half-shekel that on the ground of ransom alone is he a living soul among the people of God. But further, the money was appointed for the service of the tabernacle. Each one registered not only possessed his soul as a ransomed one, but each had his memorial in the service of the sanctuary. This was very blessed for them, for though the people had not as individuals the special privileges of service, yet each one was represented and had his memorial in the tabernacle by this offering. There is an analogy for the Christian. Looked at as associated with Christ, we are all of one company with Him, entering into the holiest, and worshipping there, but as individuals there are privileges which grace accords to each. The Philippians were not set in the same individual path of service as Paul, but they were not debarred thereby from having fellowship with the ministry of the gospel specially entrusted to him, and he owns their privilege in the words, "Both in my bonds; and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace." The feeblest saint has the privilege of having his memorial in the service of the interests of Christ. Not only is he written as one of the redeemed, but he has his part in association with the interests of the Lord.

Then follows (v. 17) the provision for the maintenance in priestly communion of those who ministered in the sanctuary. We have seen in chap. xxix. 4 that they had been already washed or bathed in water. Thus they were clean, as our Lord said to His disciples, "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." The Word is that which converts the soul; by which the thoughts and desires of the

holy affections and thoughts which are of God. But a

soul thus converted and born again can only find in the revelation of the things of God that which responds to these new affections and desires. Such a revelation was figuratively made in the tabernacle and its services. Hence we find such utterances in the lips of saints of old as these: "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in His temple" (Ps. xxvii. 4); and again, "My soul thirsteth for Thee to see Thy power and Thy glory, so as I have seen Thee in the sanctuary" (Ps. lxiii. 1, 2); and yet again, "How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! my soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord. . . . For a day in Thy courts is better than a thousand." (Ps. lxxxiv. 1, 2, 10.) To serve in the sanctuary was the privilege of the priestly company; but in order to their enjoyment of it, all that would hinder their communion and service must be judged by the Word, and their intimacy with these privileges be according to its requirements. It will not allow anything inconsistent with priestly nearness.

The place of the laver was between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar. (v. 18.) Its position shows on the one side an imperative necessity ("that they die not"), and on the other a gracious provision for those who approached. The washing of water judged and removed all that was contrary to holiness, so that the Lord should not judge (1 Cor. xi. 31), and also gave fitness for communion with the mind of God as expressed and revealed in the sanctuary. The Lord's gracious action in washing the disciples' feet (John xiii.) is of 12

the same character. "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." When a priest entered into the sanctuary he was not occupied with the needs or the acceptance of men, as at the brazen altar (though he must be clean for that), but with Him who dwelt there, and with the manifestation of Himself, now known in Christ. The sovereignty of grace flowed out in Christ

christ. The sovereignty of grace flowed out in Christ when He came into this world. Here He died for our sins, but He has gone out of the world to the Father, and His service is to give us intimacy with Himself there. The Word revealing the truth, not only as to His death, but as to His resurrection and departure to the Father, is that which judges all that is of man and associates us with Christ in the place where He is. The type could not foreshadow this, it could not go beyond the intimation of a people in nearness according to the

then revelation of God. The place of intimacy into

which the Son would bring His own, when about to depart out of this world to the Father, could not be known until He revealed it.

The "oil of holy ointment" is next brought before us. With it the tabernacle and its vessels were to

be anointed and sanctified. All was to be set apart for God as holy to Him. The priests who carried on the service and worship of the sanctuary were also anointed. What is for God must be in the power of the Spirit. It figures a scene and service where the energy and will of man have no place. All is sanctified for God. Upon man's flesh, that is upon man as such, the oil must not be poured. Upon a priest it could, that is, upon one taken out of the standing of man in the flesh. The washing of Aaron and his sons from their old associations finds its antitype now in the purification of believers by the death of Christ. Blood too was

13 applied to them. The water and blood from the side of a dead Christ witness that the believer is no longer in the standing of flesh. "He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one," And the Spirit is the power by which the believer lives to God. We cannot have shadowed here the privileges which believers possess as anointed by the Spirit. They are thus enabled to know the things which are freely given of God. He is too "the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father." Hence by one Spirit we have, through Christ, access to the Father. By the Spirit we are baptized into one body, and united to Christ in heaven. Nothing of this comes before us in the type, and even in that in which we now find an analogy, the antitype surpasses. We can look at believers as a spiritual house, a holy priesthood offering up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. They are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit, and so far they answer to what is typified, but the saints who compose the church are a new creation in Christ. In Him the whole building fitly framed together grows to a holy temple in the Lord. It will, too, be the heavenly tabernacle of God, the vessel of the Spirit's power towards Israel and the earth in the millennium. The saints of this dispensation will take the place of the priestly family-Aaron and his sonsto Israel. It is this aspect of worship which comes before us in the book of Revelation; we do not find that character of worship which tells of the relationship

either of sons before the Father, or of the members of the body of Christ. It is as looking towards the earth that they say, "Unto Him that loveth us, and has washed us from our sins, and made us kings and priests unto God and His Father"; and again, the new song

of chap. v. celebrates redemption to God with a view to reigning upon the earth. Still it will be a blessed moment when the Spirit is poured out from on high, a river of refreshing from the heavenly city.

We have partly anticipated the incense, having looked at it as burnt upon the golden altar, or put before the mercy-seat. In either case it was for God, "holy unto the Lord." The perfections of Christ were for God, while in the anointing oil we have the perfections with which the created scene (the tabernacle) is to be filled in the power of the Spirit. It was too for the anointing of the priests, that they might be sanctified and enabled to minister in the knowledge and savour of these perfections. The incense was for God, nevertheless we are privileged to enter into the delight which He has in Christ. The priests enjoyed the fragrance of the incense while offering it to God.

It seems to me that there is something beyond

this which the love of Christ has made ours. He has said. "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." I do not think the tabernacle goes beyond the created scene, and what Christ is as the manifestation of God in man, and what He is as man for God, and all this is very blessed and wonderful. But in the verse we have quoted, it is what the Son is with the Father, loved before the foundation of the world. True, He enters that glory as Man, but it is the glory that He had before there was a created scene. He wills that we should see it. Marvellous blessing-fruit of divine and eternal love. Lord, may our hearts respond to it for Thy name's sake! T. H. R.

GOD'S NEW COMMENCEMENT.

It is almost needless to remind the reader that the New Year is neither a starting-point for God nor for His people. Legality loves to begin a new period of time with new resolutions and hopes, but it soon discovers that both the one and the other are powerless for spiritual advantage and soon come to nought. The strength of the soul lies in having God's thoughts, and we therefore seize the passing opportunity to ascertain what these are as to His new commencement.

In the book of Genesis we read that "in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." For this world therefore the morning of creation was the dawn of a new day. What took place to dim its brightness is not revealed, but that something occurred to mar what God had made is evident from the statement in verse 2, that "the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep." Thereupon "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters," but still the beginning was when God first called forth into existence the heaven and the earth. His counsels of grace, though formed in a past eternity, were not yet revealed, and indeed were only hinted at after the failure of Adam as the responsible man, in the pregnant words addressed to the serpent, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." The first man Adam. together with the creation, the old creation which was 16

suited to the one who had been formed out of the dust of the ground, must now, when the fulness of time should have arrived, be for ever displaced and set aside by the introduction of the Second Man out of heaven. God's new commencement must consequently be connected with Him.

In order to enter more fully into this we may pass under review the occurrence of the word "beginning" in connection with our blessed Lord. John's gospel commences thus, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." The slightest consideration will show that the words "in the beginning" cannot be the same here as in Genesis, inasmuch as they refer to the existence, the external existence, of a divine Person, for it says distinctly, "The Word was God"; and the whole verse proclaims, as often pointed out, that the blessed Person spoken of is eternal as to His being, distinct as to His person, and divine as to His nature. The beginning here is thus an expression adapted to our feeble apprehensions, which reaches back to a period before time was, and conveys the thought of eternity.

Coming now to John's first epistle, we find the phrase "from the beginning," and this evidently marks a point of time. What period then does it indicate? John states it in unmistakable language. He says, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us)." The closing words of this

scripture make it beyond doubt that the apostle refers to our blessed Lord in incarnation (even if he include, as he surely does, His resurrection), for it was down here, after that the Word became flesh, that the only begotten Son revealed that eternal life which He had ever enjoyed in a past eternity with the Father. It was manifested unto us, John writes, that is in the circle of His disciples, to those, and to those alone, whose eyes had been opened to discern in Jesus of Nazareth the divine Son.

This was indeed a new commencement in this world,

when the divine and heavenly Man brought down to earth in His own person the life of heaven; for it must never be forgotten that from His birth He was the Second Man, although it is equally true that He was not in the condition of the Second Man, nor did He take His place as such until in resurrection. But from the moment of His advent into this scene all God's thoughts and counsels for man centred in Him, and, from the fact of what and who He was. He displaced all else. Heaven's object of delight, He was also in the grace of God to become the sole object of every one who received Him, so that even His incarnation morally passed judgment upon Adam and his race. The cross made manifest what man was, and proclaimed the termination of his trial and his judicial end; but the incarnation, when the blessed eternal life was brought down to earth in the Son become man, is the "beginning" of which John writes.

If, in the next place, we turn to Colossians, we shall find yet another thing. In chapter i. 18 we read, "And He is the Head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead." From the

fact that the apostle speaks of Christ here as the Head of the body, the church, it is manifest that he presents Him in His risen and glorified condition, and to remove all possible doubt, after he has termed Him the beginning, he adds, the firstborn from the dead. Christ in resurrection is thus God's new commencement; for Christ in resurrection is the revelation of God's counsels for

man. It is indeed only in resurrection that Christ becomes the Head of a new and heavenly race; and Christ glorified is the expression of God's thoughts for all the heavenly people; for He has predestinated them to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. The resurrection of Christ is thus a moment of supreme importance, marking as it does God's new beginning after all the sad history of man's failure and sin, but it is a moment on which the eye of God had rested from all eternity; for while Adam, as the responsible man, came first upon the scene of this world, Christ was ever the Man of His counsels, the One in whom and through whom the whole universe will be filled with redemption glory. Another expression in Revelation iii. demands a

brief notice. There Christ terms Himself "The beginning of the creation of God." This is different from Colossians, in that our attention is directed here to the new creation of which Christ is the beginning, rather than to Himself in His new condition as defining a fresh epoch. They are connected in that both refer to Him in resurrection; but we learn from Revelation (as from other scriptures) that there is a new creation suited to the divine and heavenly Man, and that He Himself, in His condition as risen and glorified, is the

expression of it. He presents Himself thus to Laodicea because the Church ought to have been the exhibition morally of the new creation in the power of the Holy Ghost. But she has failed, failed utterly; but God's thoughts are completely realized in Christ, and the presentation of Himself in this character serves to bring out by the very contrast the awful failure of the church in responsibility as a witness-bearer for Christ. It may however be enquired, If Christ in resurrection is God's new beginning, what is ours? One verse in Exodus will answer the question. In connection with the Passover lamb it is said, "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you." Our new beginning is therefore when we are brought under the efficacy of the finished work of Christ, when we understand or receive in some measure God's thoughts concerning the death and resurrection of His beloved Son. Or, if

THE WORLD AND THE LOVE OF GOD.

we speak, according to the truth of John's gospel, it is when we pass out of death into life. (Chapter v. 24.) Does the reader know this new beginning for himself?

1 John iv.

At the end of 1 John iii the Holy Spirit is mentioned as having been given to believers, and by this we know that God dwelleth in us. Immediately afterwards we find the work of the enemy in sending forth many false prophets into the world, and the necessity of trying the spirits; for ever since the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, the tactics of the enemy

have been those of spiritual imposture. The world's true character comes out here, and note that it is a world into whose bosom many false prophets have been received: no one is more likely to receive a ready welcome from the world than a false prophet. Such have been popular in all times.

But a certain test is given whereby the spirits may be proved—that is, Jesus Christ come in flesh—and every spirit that would take away in the least degree anything from the divine or human glory of our Lord, is not of God. The presence of the blessed Son of God—truly incarnate, as John's gospel presents Him—is the test, and the spirit of antichrist is detected where Jesus Christ is not confessed.

This then is the character of the world in which we live. It has rejected Jesus, and has received with open arms a host of false prophets, and it will end with the acceptance of Antichrist. The age will end in the development of man's independence to such a degree, that he will exalt himself to the very highest point of pretension, and revolt against God; and, as one who has climbed recklessly to the top of a high steeple, suddenly smitten with vertigo, falls and is broken to pieces, so shall the pride of the antichrist come to an end, judged as he shall be of the Lord when once he shall have attained the bad eminence to which he is ascending.

The point is that the spirit of the antichrist is already in the world and we have to meet it an alleady in the world and we have to meet it an alleady in the world and we have to meet it an alleady in the world and we have to meet it an alleady in the world and we have to meet it an alleady in the world and we have to meet it an alleady in the world and we have to meet it an alleady in the world and we have to meet it an alleady in the world and we have to meet it an alleady in the world.

already in the world, and we have to meet it on all sides. It is the spirit which denies man's ruin, and which would exalt him to the skies.

But we have a very blessed statement as to all believers, "Ye are of God, little children, and have

overcome them; because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world." The presence of the Holy Ghost in the family of God (for here the "children" takes in all Christians) is a most wonderful fact, and He is infinitely superior to the terrible and restless spirit which is in the world.

They are of the world, and speak according to its

principles, and are listened to readily; the fulse prophets have very often a philanthropic doctrine to propound, the amelioration of the whole human race, universal brotherhood, and other very grand schemes, but all these things are of the world, that is, according to its principles.

These men will be listened to, and I recollect once seeing an immense crowd round a preacher in London, and saying to a friend, "Let us go to listen; I am perfectly certain that it is not the gospel he is preaching, for if so he would not have so large an audience." And indeed it was not the gospel, but exhortations to abstain from alcohol, and to practise civic virtues, and thus to prosper on earth, with a hope of Paradise hereafter. All such teaching will be readily received, provided that man's fall and ruin and God's claims be ignored.

The world studies political economy, in which there is not one thought of God or of His Christ, but how to make the best use of the resources of this planet without Him.

The world listens to the false prophets; but those who are of God listen to the apostles as having the divine message from the Lord Himself, who came into this world, the Son of God incarnate, the Truth. Blessed be all they who receive His message!

The manner in which the love of God is presented to us in the following verses makes a very blessed contrast to this dark world and the Antichrist. The whole family of children are characterized by love, and the nearer we are morally to God the more will this be known. I recollect in reading of Mahomet's supposed journey to the seventh heaven (the whole thing an impudent imposture), that the false prophet said that when he approached within a bow-shot of the deity, a mortal chill froze the very blood in his veins; and this, I thought, condemns the whole system of Islam, for the nearer we are to God the less are we chilled. It is the very contrary.

The three blessed aspects of the love of God have often been insisted upon, and I merely wish to call attention to the subject.

- 1. The love of God manifested. (v. 9.)
- 2. Perfected in us. (v. 12.)
- 3. Perfected with us.* (v. 17.)

We are called upon to love one another because love is of God, and the character and nature of one born of God is to love. God's love was manifested in the gift of His Son when we had no love for Him, and now, in the midst of a heartless world, we are exhorted to love one another. This has often been spoken of; may we show it in true self-denial and devotedness!

In verse 12 the beginning is the same as in John i. 18; the ending different. It is no longer a question of the presence of Jesus in the world, the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father declaring Him;

^{*} This is the true sense of the passage thus, "Herein has love been perfected with us," etc.

upon earth are to express God's love. "If we love one one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us." And the blessed communion of saints follows; for when the apostle says that we know we abide in Him, he adds not merely that the Holy Spirit has been given, but that He hath given us of His Spirit; there is communion, participation. We form one family and have by the Holy Spirit the same blessed objects, the Father and Son.

To give a simple illustration, I recollect that when brothers in different regiments met sometimes at a station on the high road in India, at the change of troops, all their conversation was of their own family -their father, mother, &c.; they were of one family, and had the same joys in common. Only for us it is by the Holy Ghost, The third aspect of the love of God carries us right

on to the end-love perfected with us; all fear has been driven out, and it is not said "As He is, so shall we be in heaven"; but "as He is, so are we in this world." That is, we are perfect in Him who shall eventually judge the quick and the dead, and knowing the Judge as our blessed Saviour we have no fear of any kind, but the assurance that the same love which was manifested in the gift of the Son to be the propitiation for our sins; that this same love, I say, shall accompany us to the very end of our course.

May our souls be confiding in the God of love, so that we may be kept in the midst of this benighted age, in the full enjoyment of our highest privileges, and be showing in all our conduct that we love one another. E. L. B.

THE HOLY CITY, NEW JERUSALEM.

Rev. xxi., xxii.

- 'For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."—2 Con. v. 21.
 - On wondrous city: pure, translucent gold!

 Each gate, unclosed for endless day, "one pearl."

 By faith thy lofty splendour I behold:

Thy calm surrounds me, mid the world's mad whirl.

- All Wisdom's ways of pleasantness and peace Lead to you amber highway of the blest.
- Long ere earth's strife of Babel tongues doth cease Faith sees God's glory; Hope foreknows God's rest.
- This "Holy City" out of heaven descends;
 Comes—like "the Saviour of the world"—from God.
- Thence, ere earth's night of tears and sorrow ends, Her light, in diamond beauty, streams abroad.
- Her jasper clearness doth His presence tell; This CITY is of God the chosen place.
- "No temple"—where God and the Lamb shall dwell, Where men behold the glory of His grace.
- Radiant foundations, wrought with every name Of Thine apostles, O most holy Lord!
- They who were with Thee in Thy path of shame, Shine in Thy glory; Thou art their reward.
- Thou, Lamb of God, hast suffered; Thou wilt reign; By Thee alone the nations can be blest.
- Thou camest down. We praise Thee; Thou wert slain; Thou art the Giver of eternal rest.
- "Come unto ME." This voice is from the throne.
 "Come unto ME." saith every ray of light.
- "Come unto ME:" the Lamb is thus made known.
 Where He is centre there can be "no night."

Nought that defileth ever enters there;
"Without" are all who sin, who love a LIE;
None but the "saved" that holy joy can share—
"Saved" for the earth, or "saved" to dwell on high.

Crystal the river, pure and clear its flow,
Out from the throne of God and of the Lamb.
The tree of life on either side doth grow,
That constant fruit is His who saith "I AM."

Leaves of the tree the nations' woes shall heal;
Realm of the blest, the curse shall be no more.
God and the Lamb the throne in light reveal;
All sin's rebellion shall at last be o'er.

LIFE is the "water;" LIFE the fruitful "tree."
"I AM the Way, the Truth, the Life," He saith;

'T is through His cross the path of life must be.
O life abundant! won, Lord, through Thy death.

Eternal life! thrice blessed gift of God;
He, in His mighty love, spared not His Son.
Oh, tell His gospel, tell His praise abroad;
Let all rejoice to say, "Thy will be done."

O perfect triumph of His matchless skill!

Who ever homeward doth our footsteps guide.

O deep delight in God's most holy will! Bliss of the Lamb, the Spirit, and the Bride.

O glorious home of God's eternal love!

In righteousness, the basis sure of grace.

O blest possession of the things above!

O rapt beholding of the Saviour's face!

Then shall His servants serve Him evermore; Wearing His holy name upon their brow. All need and pain, all toil and conflict o'er; All glory His, eternally and Now."

HALSDON, 1892.

H. K. B

SCRIPTURE NOTES.

1.

John xii. 7.

WHETHER Mary had apprehended the fact of the Lord's rejection and of His approaching death is not revealed; but it is clear from these words that He was more entirely the object of her heart at this moment than of any one of His disciples, and consequently that she understood more fully what was passing around Him. The following remarks, if duly weighed, will, we judge, interpret for the reader the significance of Mary's act: "Mary had tasted the word of the Lord: that word, full of love and light, had penetrated her heart. had given her back her beloved brother. She saw the hatred of the Jews rise against Him whom she loved, and who had introduced into her heart the feeling of divine love; in proportion as the hatred rose, her affection for the Saviour rose too, and gave it courage to show itself. It was the instinct of affection, which felt that death was casting its shadow over Him who was the life, as Jesus felt it also-the only case in which Jesus found sympathy on earth. The Lord gives to Mary's act, instinctive fruit of affection and of devotedness, a voice that came from His divine intelligence: what she had done she had done for His burial." It was thus the Lord's own estimate of the value of her act—an act, however, which could only have proceeded from one who was in communion with His own mind and heart in His then circumstancesan act therefore expressive of absorbing affection and The difference between the accounts in devotedness Matthew and in this gospel—the ointment in the former being poured on His head, and in the latter on His feet—is explained by the respective characteristics of the presentation of Christ in these gospels. In Matthew He is seen as the Messiah, and hence, as God's anointed One, the ointment is put upon the head; in John, where He is presented as the Word, and as the eternal Son, His feet are anointed-significant of worship—the worship due to Him from all His redeemed. All the details of the scene are full of blessed instruction for the Lord's people; and the more they ponder upon them, the more they will admire the Lord's unspeakable grace.

II.

2 Cor. v. 10. It is asked if the deeds, the sins of a believer before

conversion, will be brought up before the judgment-seat of Christ. As sins they will not be, for the testimony of the Holy Ghost is, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more"; and before the believer is "manifested" before the judgment-seat of Christ, he will have been conformed to the image of his glorified Lord. There could not be therefore any further question as to guilt. But this does not preclude an entire review of the actions, though sins when they were done, of the whole of a believer's life in this world. The language of this scripture is, "That everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." This, we think, conveys the

thought that all the deeds of which the body has been the instrument will be exposed to the action of the light. No limit of time, whether before or after conversion, is given, it is simply the deeds of the body; and we conclude therefore that the Lord in His tender grace will show to us the spring and motive of all our deeds, that with Him (for there we shall be in fullest fellowship with His own mind) we may perceive their true character. With Him we shall rejoice at the condemnation of every work of the flesh, and with Him we shall also rejoice at every little service which calls forth His approbation, while at the same time we shall magnify Him for the grace which produced it, and which enabled us to render it. What has been of ourselves we shall wholly reject, and what has been of Himself will beget in us thanksgiving and praise. Many a parent, after he has completely forgiven his child for some disobedient act, and restored him to a sense of his favour and love, will talk over and explain to him his failure. So in a more perfect way, when we are manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ, He will go over our past lives, pass everything under review, and the issue will be that we shall understand in a new way that it is by grace alone we have been saved; and when He deigns to recompense us for anything which He Himself wrought in and through us, our hearts will overflow with adoration as we perceive the wondrous character of His perfect love.

THE more we exalt Christ, the more fully we are in communion with the mind and heart of God.

PAUL AT CORINTH.

Acrs xviii. As one pursues the study of the life of Paul, nothing

so arrests the attention as his unwearying devotedness. and the remarkable display of the energy of the Spirit of God in connection with his labours. If Paul were not the perfect servant who could say, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work," he yet followed very closely in his Master's steps. There were but few pauses (and these enforced) in his activity; and hence we find in this chapter, that as soon as his work was done at Athens he came to Corinth. This was a noted city in the apostle's day, a busy mart of the Eastern world, noted both for its prosperity and its profligacy, alike in its former and later history. If Athens was celebrated for its schools of philosophy and for its devotion to idolatry, Corinth was famed far and wide for its wealth and for its mercantile activity.

It would seem that Paul made this journey alone, and that his arrival in the commercial capital of Greece was unheralded, unwelcomed, and even unknown. The first thing recorded of him in this place is, that he "found a certain Jew named Aquila . . . with his wife Priscilla . . . and came unto them. And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers." (vv. 2, 3.) It was a custom among the Jews, says the writer referred to in a former paper, that all

boys should learn a trade. "What is commanded of a father towards his son?" asks a Talmudic writer. "To circumcise him, to teach him the law, to teach him a trade." And another Rabbi wrote, "He that teacheth not his son a trade doth the same as if he taught him to be a thief." In accordance with these maxims, the father of Paul (Saul) had him instructed in the art of tent-making; and on his coming to Corinth it was his first concern, it would seem, to discover the means of carrying on his occupation, that, independent of man, and forbearing to use his right to "live of the gospel," he might "make the gospel of Christ without charge." (See 1 Cor. ix. 11-19.) This explains the circumstance of his joining Aquila and Priscilla on this occasion.*

It is well to pause and reflect upon the scene here presented. Paul was the Lord's chosen vessel, minister both of the gospel "which was preached to every creature which is under heaven," and of "the mystery" which had never before been divulged; and at this moment he had come to this celebrated city, charged with the execution of his mission as the Lord's messenger. But so far from being attended with any outward signs of the nature of his calling, or being accredited by any special display of his Lord's power and support, he ministered with his own hands unto his necessities, and afterwards to the necessities of his companions. (Chap. xx. 34; 1 Cor. iv. 12; 1 Thess. ii. 9.) There are those who imagine that a worldly position

The question has often been debated whether Aquila and Priscilla were at this time Christians. That they were so afterwards is certain; and if they were led to the truth through Paul's instrumentality, it only so much the more magnifies the grace of God.

and influence can further the interests of Christ in this world, maintaining that by a "judicious" use of these a readier access can be obtained to the "upper classes" of society. Let all such ponder the spectacle of the great apostle of the Gentiles working with Aquila and Priscilla at his trade of tent-making; and let them also read his words, addressed afterwards to the converts in this city, "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in His presence."

During the week days, or at least five of them, Paul

laboured with his own hands; but "he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks." According to his wont he went to the Jew first (see chapters xiii, xiv. &c.), and while thus engaged, Silas and Timotheus joined him from Macedonia, to his joy and comfort; for, busy as he had been in Corinth, he had been much concerned about his converts in Thessalonica, and he was much encouraged when Timothy came to Corinth and brought him good tidings of their faith and charity, and that they had good remembrance of him always, desiring greatly to see him as he also to see them. (1 Thess. ii.) Notwithstanding his tender concern for the saints he had so recently left, Silas and Timotheus found Paul "pressed in the Spirit" (or, according to another reading, "pressed in respect of the word") in his testimony to the Jews that Jesus

was the Christ. We understand this to mean that his message to them lay as a heavy burden upon his soul, and that he deeply felt his responsibility as to it. But in proportion to the ardour and urgency of the preacher was the activity of Satan in stirring up the enmity of the hearers; and so persistent and wilful was their opposition that Paul, having thrown the responsibility of rejecting his message upon their own souls, left them, saying, "From henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles."

This marked the second phase of the apostle's labours in Corinth, and, as is apparent by the subsequent history, the hand of the Lord was with him in this new departure. First, he went to the house of a proselyte, Justus, one who, doubtless, had received the apostle's message. Then it is noted that "Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house." God's way is ever the right way. It might have been thought by timid souls that the apostle's solemn and final abandonment of the Jews in Corinth was calculated to confirm them in their hatred of the gospel. It was not so, but it was rather the means of bringing Crispus and his household to decision. Crispus was one of the few whom Paul himself baptized. (1 Cor. i.) We read, moreover, that "many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized." The remark cannot but be made, that communion with the mind of God as to those to whom the message is to be delivered is as necessary as communion with His mind as to the message itself. A striking illustration of this may also be seen in chapter xi. Some there preached "the word to none but unto the Jews only"; others, "when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them; and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord." So was it with Paul. While preaching to the Jews we do not read of conversions, but as soon as he turned to the Gentiles "many . . . believed"—how many the Spirit of God does not say.

Paul's labours at this time were of no ordinary kind. Writing to the saints later on he says, "I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling." (1 Cor. ii. 3.) And He who saw from the mountaintop His disciples toiling in the rowing, beheld His servant's need of encouragement. He therefore spake to Paul in the night by a vision, "Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee; for I have much people in this city." As Paul surveyed the rising opposition, he might well be daunted, if not driven from his post, if he only considered his own capability of meeting it. It was therefore revealed to him, in an especial manner, that it was not a question of himself, but of the Lord as against the enemy. The assured presence of the Lord, the knowledge that the servant has His mind and protection, always gives sustainment and courage. Two things were, moreover, made clear: first, that not a hair of the servant's head could fall to the ground without his Lord's permission; and, secondly, that his work could not be hindered until the Lord's purposes had been accomplished. The "much people" in the city must be gathered in, spite of Satan's efforts to hinder. Hence the Holy

Spirit is careful to add that the apostle "continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them."

But while Paul had been cheered by the Lord's tender care and assurance of support and succour, he was not to escape persecution. With one accord the Jews "made insurrection" against him. The reader cannot fail to notice that it was not the heathen idolaters, but God's ancient people, who were the chief opponents of the gospel. These were the everready tools of Satan's enmity. It has ever been that the chief obstacle to the spread of the truth has been found in "religion," and often under the mask of zeal for God. The charge brought on this occasion was, "This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law." Gallio, the "deputy of Achaia" at this time-a man well known in history, and one who had obtained great esteem "by his amiable character and popular manners"-was God's instrument for defeating the machinations of the Jews. The "easy-going" and cultured Roman was too indifferent to all such questions, as those the Jews raised, to allow himself to be their accomplice in silencing Paul. He therefore "drave them from the judgment seat," and he thus fulfilled the Lord's words, that no man should set upon Paul to hurt him. His action pleased the enemies of the Jews, and they seized the opportunity of venting their animosity against them by beating Sosthenes* before the judgment seat. But "Gallio cared for none

^{*} Whether this is the Sosthenes Paul mentions in 1 Corinthians i. 1 cannot be positively known. If it be, he must have become a Christian after this circumstance.

of those things"; and the effect of the Jews' action was to secure tranquillity for the apostle's labours. (v. 18.)

In order to obtain an idea of the intensity of Paul's spiritual life, and of his incessant activity, it may be mentioned that his two epistles to the Thessalonians were written during his residence in Corinth. From these we may learn how continuous were his prayers for the saints in that city. "We give thanks to God," he says, "always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; remembering without ceasing your work of faith," &c. Examining his epistles indeed, it might be almost concluded that he did nothing but pray; reading his history, it almost would appear that he did nothing but work. In fact, there was found in him that blessed combination of prayer and labour which made him such a devoted servant—a servant of the kind that God can always use for His glory, both in the gospel and in the ministry of His word amongst His people. May he raise up many in our own day who shall, in this particular, follow in the footsteps of Paul.

"THE LOVE OF CHRIST, WHICH PASSETH KNOWLEDGE."

Oh, who can tell Thy love?

Love better far than wine;

Love pouring from above,

Unsought, supreme, divine.

Thou gav'st Thyself for us,
The sacrifice to God;
Whose fragrance riseth thus,
And spreads Thy name abroad.

For Thou hast loved us, Lord,
When we were far from Thee;
Thou hast Thine own reward—
Now and eternally.

And in Thy constant grace
Thou still for us dost care,
To keep us in the place
Where we Thy presence share.

Thy holy, cleansing Word
Thy love doth still apply;
Thy voice therein is heard
To call us home on high.

There we with Thee shall dwell In perfect heavenly bliss. Oh, who on earth can tell Such joy, such peace, as this?

And, Lord, Thou wilt present Unto Thyself Thy Bride Beyond the firmament, Enthroned at Thy side.

A glorious Church 't will be, Lord, spotless in Thy sight; Thy Helpmeet all shall see, Wrapt in Thy glory's light.

Her joy to do Thy will,

Her bliss to be with Thee,
Thine own companion still

For Thine eternity.

We praise Thee, glorious Lord, For all Thy wondrous love; Thy Spirit shall record Its story—all—above!

"SOLOMON'S PORCH."

THREE striking events in the New Testament connect themselves with this porch. They are recorded in John x., and Acts iii., v. Although still named "Solomon's," the porch had by this time been considerably enlarged each way, but remained so far on the massive foundation laid for it by him.

The first of these events presents to us the blessed Lord now definitely rejected by the nation of Israel. At the close of this 10th chapter of John we find that, driven out, He retires to the place where John at first baptised, and there He abode. He had bidden Jerusalem and its temple farewell, so far, at least, as any testimony of grace was concerned, and had taken up His abode at John's first point of service.

How deeply significant! Having completed, so to speak, His gracious circle of service to man, and been formally refused ("I have spent my strength for nought and in vain"), He retired to the starting-point of all. Man had refused Him every overture. All was over with the nation, and all was completed as to that form of presentation of truth to it.

In verse 24 they say to Him, "If Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly." He replied, "I told you, and ye believed not." Then He appealed to His works, done in His Father's name, as the most unmistakable witness to His personal glory, and as evidence sufficient. "But," He said, "ye are not of my sheep." The fault was theirs. Despite their zeal,

their many and loud claims to the knowledge of God, their eyes were blinded and their hearts hardened by unbelief. They rejected the very words and works which declared Him, and what now remained but His rejection of them? That rejection was mutual. Their persistent unbelief rendered it necessary on His side. But why, and wherefore, did they reject Him? What evil had He done?

"My sheep," He said, "hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." Words, the plainest and fullest, failed to find a response in those who were not His sheep, whilst His voice (and each voice has

fullest, failed to find a response in those who were not His sheep, whilst His voice (and each voice has its peculiar tone) was heard by the sheep. He knew them, and they followed Him. Such was their distinguishing mark, they simply followed the Shepherd. To them He gave eternal life—a rich and glorious boon, carrying as it does the knowledge of the Father and the Son-they should never perish, nor should any one pluck them out of His hand. An earthly fold may furnish some small security—the omnipotent hand of the Son of God supplies everlasting strength and assurance. Given of the Father to Him, none should pluck them out of His hand either. What care is devoted to such worthless sheep! And then He said, "I and my Father are one." Had they asked whether He was the Christ? He now stated, in explicit terms, His oneness with the Father Himself! He asserted highest claims, but claims that were

those who so wilfully disowned them!

There He stood in Solomon's Porch in all the lowly grace of His humiliation—He who was greater

corroborated by the works He had done in the Father's name. His claims were true! Alas for

(See Matthew xii.) He who was one with His Father-rejected, refused, and deemed a fit object for the stones which poor misguided man now took up to cast at Him! What a scene! And yet what pencil could paint

it? or what pen describe it with any measure of justice? Solomon's Porch then witnessed not only the signal blessing conferred upon the sheep, and the definite condemnation of the unbelievers, but it heard also that wonderful announcement of the Lord's oneness with

the Father, whilst it was His place of departure for the original starting point of testimony. It witnessed in no small measure, the moral glory of His person, the obduracy of His foes, and the cessation of His work amid that guilty nation. The second event connected with Solomon's Porch is stated in Acts iii. The apostle Reter, invested with power from his exalted Master, had healed a poor man who had been lame from his birth, and who had daily begged for alms at the "beautiful" gate of the temple. This man clung to his healer, as he and the apostle John passed on toward the temple, and entered

"The people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering." They had often seen him lying a helpless cripple; now they saw him leaping, and walking, and praising God. It was a miracle of mercy. And the porch that had seen the rejection of the grace of a humbled Christ now beholds the grace of an

Solomon's Porch. Crowds were attracted by the sight, for the case of this poor man was widely known.

exalted One. Ah! His place had changed and His

40

circumstances had altered, but His heart remained the same. He had made the lame to walk when here on earth; He does the same to them when gone to heaven!

What a voice to the nation even now, and sounding

too in the very place, and perhaps in the very ears of those who had but lately taken up stones to stone Him. Could they appreciate this additional exercise of grace, this "supplementary mercy," and learn in it a hope, a long-lingering hope, for themselves? After all, Was the door, in such mercy, not closed against them?

or, Had it been opened afresh in order to give one more

opportunity?

List to what Peter—a vessel of the Holy Ghost now on earth, since Christ was on high—declares to them. "Ye... killed the Prince of Life, whom God hath raised from the dead... and now I wot, brethren, that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers." Guilty of this awful crime, the Holy Ghost now, as the blessed Lord in His intercession on the cross, places them on the ground of ignorance. Divine charity gives them credit

Lord in His intercession on the cross, places them on the ground of ignorance. Divine charity gives them credit for not knowing the gravity of their stupendous sin! And he adds, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, and that the times of refreshing may come (R.V.) from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ which before was preached unto you."

Would they but repent, their blessing, as a nation,

Would they but repent, their blessing, as a nation, would be even yet secured. Jesus Christ would yet come, and by His coming inaugurate the season of refreshing and restoration spoken of by all the prophets in their behalf, who were, indeed, the children of the prophets and of the covenant made with their fathers.

In a word, He would establish the millennium with them.

But the condition for this was, and still is, their national repentance. And so we read, in 2 Cor. iii., that when their heart shall turn to the Lord the veil shall be taken away. Further, "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (see Romans xi.), and all that He has promised shall yet be made good, according to His purpose, whilst the nation shall learn that it is beholden to His grace for all. Alas! this call to repentance by the Holy Ghost, through the lips of Peter, was set aside. The priests and Sadducees, who denied the resurrection, were grieved that the people should hear of it through that of the Lord Jesus. Hands were laid on these two apostles, who were thrust into the hold till next day. Such was the reception that this further offer of mercy met with. It was proudly spurned by the leaders of the people.

Satan was again at work. He had urged on the Pharisees, whose doctrines were orthodox, to oppose the Lord when He announced the new truths, as seen in the former case. Now he uses the Sadducees, who were the religious infidels of that day, to oppose the two apostles, as they ministered the grace of a glorified Christ to a people so wilfully blind. But Satan never lacks a ready instrument. He always finds material to his avil hand. Opposition to Christ personally on

lacks a ready instrument. He always finds material to his evil hand. Opposition to Christ personally, or by man as a tool, and consequent misery on man himself, is his one life-long aim. Again, then, Solomon's Porch witnesses another rejection; not now the living and lowly Jesus, but the offer of mercy sent by Him from the glory into which He had entered. It was,

" SOLOMON'S PORCH."

42 alas! the deliberate refusal of the grace of God in each

case.

Now we come to the last event recorded in connection with Solomon's Porch. It is found in Acts v. The "Church" had been commenced; the Lord had

added thousands of believers. These had continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. They had saved themselves from the nation that was now branded as "untoward"; had formed their "own company," and in love and fellowship had cared for each other in the midst of distressing circumstances. They sold their goods, disposing of houses and lands for the sake of the poor in their midst. They shared that happy "communism" which, unlike its modern political counterfeit that would say "Yours is mine," said the rather, in beautiful self-denial, "Mine is yours;" so much so that there was none among them that lacked. Happy company! Beautiful family! All too fair, however, to last in a world that had Satan for its prince. That unwearied enemy could not allow such bliss to continue undisturbed in his domain. He had destroyed the felicity of Eden; he would now endeavour to break the fellowship of the Church. He had marred God's rest in creation; he would now try to prevent Christ's pleasure in the saints. Oh, what a triumph has Satan gained since he has succeeded in dividing, and disintegrating, and spoiling the blissful harmony of the Church of God! There is nothing on earth sweeter, dearer, or more to be desired than fellowship in the truth and Spirit of God; and the neutralization of this fellowship, this heaven on earth, has been the devil's object ever since his effort in

Acts v. Then the "unity of the Spirit" was first touched—a blessed unity which, whatever be our responsibility to keep it now, will never be known in all its precious and living fulness until the Church shall be with her Glorified Head on high. Thank God, then it shall be!

Ananias and Sapphira acted the part of deceivers,

lied unto the Holy Ghost, and died under the judgment of the Lord. Sin was punished forthwith. The fire of God's presence burned with sin-withering power. The Lord maintained the holiness of His house. Fear fell on all, and by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people. What mighty proofs of the presence of the Lord in the midst

signs and wonders wrought among the people. What mighty proofs of the presence of the Lord in the midst of His assembly in holiness and grace!

And now we read that "they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch." This was therefore a notable and frequent arena of apostolic testimony. It

notable and frequent arena of apostolic testimony. It was public and large, close to the temple, and chosen therefore by them for making widely known the truth which so filled their own hearts. But of the rest, we read, "durst no man join himself to them." They were marked by holy separation from evil, and such consecration to God, as made their company to be unsolicited by mere nature. For it, these servants of Christ had no attraction. The cross of their Lord was to them a living reality, and what did not savour of it, and of the holy and heavenly ways of the Master, had no place in their affections or habits.

These were days of power, days of that kingdom which is not in .word, but in power. The Church and the world were then dissociated the one from the other. There was nothing in common between them. An ecclesiastical, or political, or commercial relation was unknown and unsought. Each moved in its own orbit, and possessed its own sphere. That is the normal and true position of each. Alas! eighteen hundred years have produced an amazing change. An amalgamation has been effected whereby the two are blended to the loss of any distinctive character. The world may have gained, but the Church has lost immensely.

Such power rested on the apostles that diseases were miraculously healed and evil spirits cast out. God was there in grace; but a testimony so bold could not be endured by the infidel leaders, who, filled with indignation, laid hands on them, and cast them into the common prison. Thence they were delivered by God's providential means and angelic ministry; so that, thus divinely encouraged, they again taught in the temple "all the words of this life." For so doing they were brought before the council, and charged with disobedience to the command not to teach or preach in the name of Jesus. In reply Peter asserted that "we ought to obey God rather than men."

God had commanded them to speak; but these men, these blinded leaders, had forbidden them. In such a clash of authority the higher must be followed; but in this case, what must have now been the condition of the men who thus contravened the command of God? Finally, Peter states that God had raised up Jesus, whom they had hanged on a tree, and had exalted Him to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

Lovely statement of grace - forgiveness of sins! Not the judgment of the sinner. That is involved in the ears of these deluded men. And the result-? A divided council followed. Anyhow God was refused; His servants beaten, and then charged not to speak in the name of Jesus. They left the council full of the joy of a true confession of their despised and outcast Master.

A triple rejection was thus enacted in Solomon's

Porch; first, that of the Lord Himself when here in lowly grace; secondly, that of "supplementary mercy to Israel"; and lastly that of the pardoning grace of an exalted and glorified Saviour. Such is Israel, and such is man! Yet, spite of all, deeper counsels prevailed; fuller grace appears; heavenly glory unfolds; the Church is called, formed, and established as the body of Christ; and the world-wide love of God was proved in the gift of His Son, "that whosoever believeth

in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

A LETTER ON DEALING WITH SOULS.

J. W. S.

CAPE TOWN, S. AFRICA, October 11th. MY DEAR H, I was very pleased to get your

all real blessing must be His work, although carried on through human channels; and, alas! often spoiled because too much partaking of the channel. With regard to work I feel more and more the need of patience, and, as James says, "The husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter

letter, and hear of the work of the Lord. For surely

rain." He does not only plow and sow, but waits for the "early and latter rain." It would seem to indicate the absolute need of the Spirit's work between whiles, making good the plowing and the sowing, and so on. The intelligent husbandman knows what he is waiting for. With us, we are often able to discern that the plowing, sowing, and waiting have already been done, and we have only to reap. Other men have laboured, and we enter into their labours. Hasty work bears its character, and very unsatisfactory it always is. The souls themselves are damaged, and never seem to get over it; they carry the marks of it to the end of their days. They are also a great trial to other believers, and no testimony in the gospel; for they never had much plowing up themselves, and consequently make light of that very necessary part of good husbandry. If the preachers had more faith, I believe they would preach shorter and wait longer for the Spirit's work in the soul. Many things may tend to make us hurry souls to confession, but we lose by it in the end. For what do we hurry? The person to decision! What sort of decision? Intellectual! Not but what there may be a real work of God, but beyond that is only intellectual. This damages the soul seriously; and if you knew their subsequent history, you would find that either they continue to be satisfied with a semiintellectual belief, or they get into darkness through having said more than they subsequently found to be true. Thus preachers are often responsible for very unsatisfactory conversions. This is the result of my own experience and observation as one who has cared for souls somewhat actively for about thirty years. Of course I cannot expect my younger brethren to see as

I do, as they have not had the same experience; but I believe it is the experience of all old labourers who are accustomed to see their own work years after. For years I have always exhorted souls to confess to God first, and to man afterwards. I don't think any real soul would say more to God than was true; but in confessing to man they unconsciously say too much, and are unhappy afterwards, or else careless. In all this I see a need of faith in God, and a discerning that only that which is a work of His Spirit is any good. Everything else withers away in time. Young preachers are often much used in blessing which appears, but in this I see the goodness of God, leading them to such places where the Spirit is about to work, and perhaps has already begun. The plowing, the sowing, and waiting have already been done by others, so the new-comer has only the reaping to do. This shows results which the plowing, sowing, and waiting do not. The older servants can be set to that job as having some experience, for they know results come at the end, and not so much at the beginning. Thus we learn to keep the judgment-seat in view, and to talk very soberly about conversions. At the best I think we are poor judges. I dare say you know many old professors of whom you would have to say, I doubt if they were ever converted. I quite agree with you in the desire to be more spiritual; and then we read, "He that is spiritual discerneth all things."

I shall always be glad to hear from you, and news of the work is very cheering.

With much love in the Lord,

Yours in Him, G. W. G.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE TABERNACLE.

Exonus xxxi.

HITHERTO we have considered the Lord's communications to Moses upon the mount, where he was also shewn the patterns according to which the tabernacle was to be constructed. Every detail was communicated. so that nothing was left for the children of Israel to plan or to arrange for themselves. If God manifests Himself. and dwells in the midst of His people, nothing could truthfully tell out this manifestation if it were not according to His own thoughts. He, too, must ordain the way of approach. The contrary is around us to-day. The idea is this, that if you are right about the foundation truth of salvation, it does not much matter how you build upon it. No Christians would like to have any other than God's foundation as the resting-place of their souls for salvation; but this foundation needs to be connected in the soul with the glory of God, in order that what is built up may accord with that glory. Otherwise all may be right as to security, but not right in the formation of the soul in Christ, and consequently in the truth of His assembly as the structure in which His purposes in Christ are carried out.

It is easy to see that if the people, in constructing the sanctuary, had departed from the patterns given to Moses, the building would not have answered to God's thoughts as to the display of Himself in Christ and His people; nor would there have been the witness of the blessing and relationship in which the people were

from God in the word His thoughts as to everything, not only as to the foundation truths of salvation, but His purposes are made known to us as He has established them in Christ for His own glory by us, and the Spirit has been given that we might be in the intelligence of them, while with Israel the tabernacle

So far then we have had the patterns communicated;

was to them a witness.

we now come to God's provision for the making of the tabernacle. The actual construction was as important as the communication of the patterns, hence the Lord provides the suited servant for carrying out His directions, "I have called by name Bezaleel," not merely a man with natural capability and skill-it is possible that he had these-but for this purpose he was filled with the Spirit of God in wisdom, and understanding, and knowledge. There is said to be this difference between a photograph and a portrait drawn by an artist. The photograph will produce the exact lineaments, so that it may be severely like, but an artist can put a life look into the picture by his own genius and spirit; hence we say "It is a speaking likeness." In order that the tabernacle and its vessels should be a living, "speaking" representation of the things in the heavens, and that the mind of God should be reflected in them, a man filled with the Spirit of God

wisdom and knowledge. . It was not mere accuracy of construction, according to human skill, that was needed, but the true reflection of the wisdom of God. In Col. i. 28 the apostle speaks of the way in which he laboured, "teaching every man in all wisdom, that

was needed to construct and fashion them with divine

50

we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." No doubt in full result that is future; but the labour and conflict of the apostle were to this end, that the saints might be in the present understanding and knowledge of the purposes of God as to them. The assembly is a structure in which during the present period the

might be in the present understanding and knowledge of the purposes of God as to them. The assembly is a structure in which, during the present period, the manifold wisdom of God is made known to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places (Ephes. iii. 10); and Paul prays (ch. i. 17) that the saints might have the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of God Himself, in order to their knowing the hope of His calling, and the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. The Spirit of God alone understands the things of God; hence even in that day of shadows Bezaleel needed the Spirit, in order that he might work out these figurative manifestations of God's thoughts in Christ and His people.

We thus learn that a ministry by the Spirit can

alone produce the living expression of Christ in the saints. Paul laboured to this end; it was by his ministry that the Spirit wrote Christ upon the hearts of the Corinthians. By the Spirit also they had been baptized into one body, and been made to drink into one Spirit. Thus there was living power to form the assembly, and also in it, that it might respond to the divine purpose in its formation. We are not speaking here of the failure in the saints to reach, or answer to, the divine intention. In the epistle to the Galatians we see that they were giving up the power of the Spirit to return to the law (ch. iii. 3), and the Corinthians were using the gifts of the Spirit for self-exaltation; thus early was a slight put upon the

presence and ministry of the Spirit; but the apostle seeks to recover the Corinthians to the divine intention by presenting the glory of the Lord to them, so that in beholding it they might be fashioned according to it, as by the Lord the Spirit.

Men having been called and endowed of God for this service of making the tabernacle, the Lord speaks to Moses again of the Sabbath. It was the sign between Him and the children of Israel, among whom He was about to dwell. The Lord frequently refers to it in the Old Testament, especially when He made any fresh covenant, or instituted any new arrangement in His relationship with Israel. Here He goes back to the first institution of the Sabbath; it was the rest of God, expressing the satisfaction which He had in His own work. We must not think that God did not find delight in His own creation, because sin has entered and spoiled His rest in it. He saw everything that He had made, and it was very good; and as to man, he is fearfully and wonderfully made, the marvellous handywork of God, the being for whom God prepared His Sabbath. This rest of God was proposed to Israel under law. They had enjoyed it for a short moment in grace, when the manna was given; and now that He is about to pitch His tabernacle in their midst He gives to them afresh His own rest, as the sign between Him and them for ever. The millennium, though not a perfect condition of things, is a kind of ante-chamber to the eternal state, the full and final rest of God; and in it there will be the keeping of a Sabbath for the earth, the true feast of tabernacles, when Israel will have been delivered fully from captivity and bondage, the earth freed from the usurper, a habitation found for the Lord by the true David, in which He will rest in the midst of His people, and the knowledge of His

glory fill the earth. The assembly is the habitation of

52

the glory which will then overshadow the earth, and through it the knowledge of God will cover the earth (John xvii. 23), while the Lord's presence will be known in a temple yet to be established in His holy hill.

In the New Testament the Lord sets aside the Sabbath, this sign of the covenant with Israel; for, on the one hand, He was rejected (Matt. xii. 1-8), and on the other He was quickening souls in view of a new creation of which they were subjects. (John v.) The first day of the week is that which belongs to the Assembly, the resurrection day on which the Lord took His place in the midst of His own.

Finally, the testimony written with the finger of God

is given to Moses for the people; but, as the history shews, it had already been broken by their making a golden calf. Still the testimony remained, though the tables on which it was written were broken at the foot of the mount. Its place was in the Ark in the mind of God, and there it was afterwards deposited, a figure of Him who magnified the law and made it honourable. It is blessed to know that God's holy claims upon man were fully maintained in Jesus. The case seemed hopeless to Moses and he broke the tables, but such an act did not reach up to the thoughts of God. The Ark was His predetermined provision for their integrity and maintenance. In Christ, the Yea and Amen, all God's glory is secured; and, blessed be His name, the sin in man which the law discovered has been put away for the believer by His death, that the full purposes of God, for His own glory in man, may be accomplished. "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Cor. v. 21.) T. H. R.

SCRIPTURE NOTES.

ī.

Galatians ii. 20.

It can scarcely be doubted, if the several passages are

carefully examined, that the word "crucified" in Galatians involves the practical application of the cross, or the personal acceptance of the truth of death with Christ. Its first occurrence is in chapter ii., where the apostle says, "I am crucified with Christ." Does he mean in this statement that all believers have been crucified with Christ? That God regards all believers as associated with Christ in His death is one of the plainest teachings of Scripture. If it were not so, the apostle could not have written to the Colossians, "If ye be dead" (have died) "with Christ," &c., and again, "For ye are dead"; but the question is whether this blessed act of grace is referred to in this passage, Notice, first, that Paul does not say "we," but "I"; and, secondly, seek for the explanation of this form of speech in the context. We learn there that Peter, fearing the Judaizers amongst the saints, had withdrawn and separated himself from the Gentile believers, declining to eat with them any longer. Paul withstood him to the face, because Peter had in fact surrendered the whole truth of grace and of Christianity; and before all the saints the apostle of the Gentiles declared once again the immutable ground of justification, that it was not by works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ. If this were true, as could not be gainsaid, there was henceforward no value to be attached to circumcision. The conduct of Peter and

his associates was therefore utterly indefensible. Paul moreover pointed out that if they were found to be sinners, while seeking to be justified by Christ, as they surely would be if circumcision were still insisted on, the Judaizers were making Christ a minister of sin. Further, the apostle adds, "If I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor"; and then he proclaims the way in which he had been delivered from the law and its claims as he proceeds, "For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ." All the claims of the law upon Paul had been met, abundantly met, in the death of Christ; the penalties he had incurred during his unregenerate life had been paid by Another, and Paul was consequently "dead to the law," inasmuch as through the cross of Christ he was discharged from its claims, and had been taken out of the sphere in which alone the law had its force and application. For he says, "I am crucified with Christ." As a believer, as one having life in Christ as risen from the dead, and owning now no other life, what was true of Christ was now, in the grace of God, true of Paul. The death of Christ was his death, the crucifixion of Christ was his crucifixion, and hence he could say, "I am crucified with Christ." He looked back upon the cross, and owned it to be the termination under judgment of his responsible life as a sinner under law, and he thus adds, "Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me," &c. It is therefore evident that such language in this connection could only be used by one who had accepted the practical application of the cross; for it is as clear that one like Peter, who had consented to the resuscitation of legal rites, could not

been crucified with Christ. That all believers have died with Christ has been affirmed, and that their old man has been crucified with Christ is taught in Romans vi.: but this in no way interferes with the contention that the Holy Spirit confines the language of this scripture to the apostle Paul.

11.

IT is evident that the apostle in this scripture refers to the Gentiles as "afar off," and to the Jews as those "that were nigh." (Compare Isaiah lvii. 19.) The

EPHESIANS ii 17.

apostle Peter makes the same distinction on the day of Pentecost, when he says, "The promise is unto you" (the Jews), "and to your children, and to all that are afar off" (the Gentiles), etc. God had separated the Jews from all the nations of the earth; He had borne them on eagles' wings, and had brought them unto Himself. He dwelt, moreover, in their midst; and representatively, through their high priest, they had access into the holiest of all. They could therefore be described as "nigh," nigh through their position of favour before God, and nigh through the many privileges they enjoyed. The Gentiles were, on the other hand, "far off," because they were "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope,

and without God in the world." This is granted; but the question is, Does any such distinction exist since the death and resurrection of Christ? Most certainly not as between Gentile and Jewish believers, as the apostle immediately proceeds, after the words cited above, to show. But there is as certainly another distinction, not between Jews and Gentiles as formerly,

but between those who are in the kingdom of heaven (also those who, though not converted, are surrounded with the privileges of the house of God-see Heb. vi. 4-6), and those who are outside of the boundaries of these places of privilege and responsibility. This explains the ground of the awful judgments that will fall upon Christendom after the church has been removed to heaven. To the Jews it was said, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities." The Lord will deal with Christendom on the same principle, "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more." Another scripture may be adduced. In Romans xi. Paul expressly says that the Gentiles have dispensationally been "graffed" into the good olive tree (vv. 17-19), and that the term "Gentiles" includes all who are in the place of privilege on earth, professors as well as believers, is shown from v. 22, "Behold therefore the goodness and the severity of God: on them which fell (Jews), severity; but toward thee (Gentiles), goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be 'cut off.'" Christendom has then, we judge, the Jew's place of nearness on earth, a position which entails, as we have seen, a very solemn responsibility. Outside of Christendom are the various nations of the world, and these are the "heathen" (nations) of the scripture. Though these are not in the place of nearness as to privilege, they are yet the object of God's thoughts of grace; and hence our blessed Lord charged His disciples to go "into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." It is scarcely necessary to add that morally all men are either alive unto God, having passed out of death into life through faith, or dead in trespasses and sins.

EXPERIENCES AT EPHESUS.

Acrs xix.

It would seem from the connection that the few disciples whom Paul found at Ephesus had been gathered by the preaching of Apollos. This man, a Jew of Alexandria, eloquent and mighty in the Scriptures, on his coming to Ephesus, spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John; and the twelve men, in reply to Paul's question, "Unto what then were ye baptised?" said. "Unto John's baptism." There was therefore entire correspondence between these converts and their teacher Apollos. It is quite true that the latter was subsequently instructed in the way of God more perfectly; but evidently the souls of his converts had been formed by his teaching at the outset. It is often so even now, that the gospel which is first used in the conversion of souls goes far to determine the character of their Christian life. The nature of the start frequently decides the whole of the believer's course, and hence the importance of the proclamation of a full gospel.

But these converts were not yet on Christian ground, and thus they were open to further teaching. They are called disciples, for they had received, through grace, the only testimony to Christ they had yet heard. It was on this account that Paul could illustrate in their case his own principle. "Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk

baptized, (Matt. iii.)

by the same rule," or, "in the same steps." He therefore sought them out, and, while bent on leading them on, acknowledged them as disciples. To discover their state, he tested them with the all-important question—a question which many professed believers of the present day would find it difficult to answer—"Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" Their answer was, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost," or rather, "If the Holy Ghost is [come]?" Of the death and resurrection of our blessed Lord, of the gift of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, they had not heard; and consequently they were, if Jews, Jews still, in the same position as were those with whom the Lord, in His blessed grace, identified Himself when He was

Paul seized the opportunity of unfolding to them the truths of Christianity, for doubtless verse 4 gives but a summary of what he explained. Their condition of soul is revealed by the fact that they instantly bowed to the new testimony, and "were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." When the servant is walking in communion with the mind of His Lord, he ever finds that the Holy Spirit has gone before him to prepare souls for his message. This is a great encouragement in the path of devotedness to His glory. Paul then laid his hands upon them, and "the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied." This marked sign and display of the Spirit's power and presence corresponded with His first bestowal on the day of Pentecost. (Acts ii. 4) In this manner these disciples passed off Jewish ground and became Christians, for they were no longer in the flesh, but in the Spirit, because the Spirit of God now dwelt in them.* (See Romans viii. 9.)

An event of great importance is, in the next place,

recorded. According to the custom of the apostle, he sought out the Jews in their synagogues, "and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God." But as in Corinth, so here, his faithful and persistent testimony excited the enmity of the carnal mind, for "divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude." This led the apostle to the decisive step of departing from them, and of separating the disciples. A new epoch was thus commenced. Hitherto the converts from among the Jews seemed to have maintained their place in the synagogue; but now the time had arrived when believers in Christ must be in distinct separation from His enemies, and must be gathered on the ground of the assembly. God had borne with His ancient people

* As an instance of the perversion of Scripture to sustain special theories, it may be mentioned that one of the most popular preachers of the day adduces this incident to prove the difference between the ordinary reception of, and being filled with, the Holy Ghost. He says, in a little book which has been circulated by thousands, "The apostle surely did not mean to ask whether they had received the special gifts of the Spirit. Their reply, at least, does not indicate that they so understood him. He wanted only to learn whether they had received that filling of the Holy Ghost which was the main feature of Pentecost." In such a manner this writer entirely obliterates the distinction between the testimony and baptism of John the Baptist and Christian testimony and baptism, as also between the operations of the Holy Spirit in past dispensations and His indwelling now in believers!

in much longsuffering; and Paul, animated with intense affection for his kinsmen according to the flesh, had gone in and out among them hoping against hope that their hearts would be opened to receive his message. But now even he was compelled to come to the conclusion that the Lord would have him, in his ministry, entirely apart from the synagogue, and consequently he withdrew the disciples from their old associations, and retired with them to "the school of one Tyrannus."

Ephesus is signalised therefore as being the first

place where believers were gathered in separation. It was the church at Ephesus, moreover, which so prospered in the spiritual life as to be able to receive the epistle that unfolds to us the highest privileges of saints as members of the body of Christ. If, on the one hand, Christ is seen in it as set at God's right hand in the heavenlies, far above all principality and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that is to come, with all things put under His feet, and given to be Head over all things to the church; on the other hand, the church is presented as His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. (Eph. i. 20-23.) Alas! it was at Ephesus also that the bitter root of the church's decline and corruption was first unbared in the words, "Nevertheless I have against thee that thou hast left thy first love." (Rev. ii. 4.) Laodicea, with all its nauseousness to Christ, because of its lukewarm condition, was but the full-blown development of Ephesus' loss of heart for Christ. Let us learn well that no amount of light and knowledge can compensate for the lack of spiritual affections. If Christ cease to have His due place in the heart, we are already, whether as assemblies or as individuals, in the path of the backslider.

It is not without significance that Paul's withdrawal from the synagogue was followed by a striking display of the Spirit's power. The word spread abroad, during the two years he continued in the school of Tyrannus, as never before-"all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks." There was no need to adopt new methods of labour, or novel means of publicity; the Word of God was its own witness, accompanied as it was by the mighty power of the Holy Spirit, and souls were attracted, as they will always be attracted, to the place where life and power are manifested. Secondly, "God wrought special miracles ("no ordinary miracles") by the hands of Paul: so that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them." The reader will be interested in comparing with this statement the account of the extraordinary energy of the Spirit flowing out through Peter and the other apostles in Acts v. (vv. 12, 16); and it is to be noted that there, as in Ephesus, the phrase is employed—"by the hands of the apostles" showing that, whoever the servant, he was but the instrument or channel of the divine power.

How different, how necessarily different, from the miracles of the Lord Jesus, who wrought them, while ever doing the will of God, in the rights of His own

appreciated.

Servant, when the woman of Galilee came and touched His clothes, and was straightway healed, it is said "Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that virtue had gone out of Him;" and in the next chapter (vi.) He confers upon His disciples the power which He Himself possessed to cast out unclean spirits. It is the same, indeed, in every gospel; and in John He confronted the Jews with the challenge, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up "-speaking of the temple of His body. True, blessedly true it is, that in coming into this world He took the place of perfect dependence and obedience; but it is also true that the lower the place He took the more fully His divine glory streamed out before the eye of faith. As another has said, "Grace is in the humbled and obedient Man; there it is what God is shines out. . . . God is revealed in what He was in a lowly Man, and by His being a lowly Man; and surely if grace is, that is grace." Understanding this, the difference between

The activity of the Spirit of God through Paul called forth the antagonism of Satan, and he attempted to discredit Paul's work through "certain vagabond Jews, exorcists," who "took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus." This machination was defeated, and Satan's agents were confounded by the very evil spirit they were seeking to expel. The effect was to further the gospel in a threefold way; first, the tidings of what had happened to the sons of Sceva spread throughout the city, and fear

His miracles and those of the apostles will be at once

fell on both Jews and Greeks, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified; next, those that believed were so wrought upon that they dissociated themselves entirely from their former magical practices, while some of them brought their costly books connected with their "curious arts," and burned them before all men; and, lastly, it is added, "so mightily grew the word of God and prevailed." Satan thus discomfited, after a pause during which mention is made of Paul's "purpose in the spirit" to visit Jerusalem and Rome, stirred up a popular tumult against the new teaching through Demetrius the silversmith. But He, who had formerly stilled the storm on the lake of Galilee, quelled also these angry billows, and delivered His servants and His people from the impending peril. The apostle's work, however, in Ephesus was now ended, and hence, "after the uproar was ceased," he "called unto him the disciples, and embraced them, and departed for to go into Macedonia." (xx. 1.)

PHILEMON.

In looking into Philemon's house (and we may do so without prying, for there is a divine insight given to us) we see an admirable picture of grace amongst men.

When grace becomes a true motive and rule to the conduct in this graceless world, when it is not only a splendid theory—oh, then we may indeed admire its wonderful fruits—there is nothing like it! One of the surest signs that the true grace of God has been understood is that peculiar and delicate care for others (in a world where each one naturally cares for himself) which we see in the case of Philemon.

It may be said that the manner is nothing, and that one must not judge of a Christian by his ways; but to such a sentiment I should oppose the whole spirit of the Epistle to Philemon, and remark also that often small things (expressions, acts, &c.) show the true characters of persons. If one wishes to know from which quarter the wind blows, it is not necessary to set up a large and expensive weathercock; a straw will be sufficient.

The 6th verse should be rendered, "That thy communion in the faith may work powerfully in the full knowledge of all the good which is in us, as to Christ Jesus." The readers will excuse this bald translation, which gives the true sense, and this gives us to understand the real drift of the epistle, that is, grace acting in the midst of the circumstances of everyday life. What I mean is that the sixth verse shows us the divine principle and motive in Philemon, and in all the saints to which Paul could make appeal: he could exhort to a noble line of action, showing himself that delicacy which proceeded from a divine source.

Some will say that the world has changed, and that we have no more runaway slaves to receive back now; the laws of society are different. To which it may be replied that the world's principles are always the same, and, no matter what particular form of manners and customs one may have to do with, there will always be exercise and trial in one's life here, and it is exactly in this that grace is to act.

I should like to notice briefly the character of Paul's action in the affair of the converted fugitive; and then the character of Philemon as painted by the apostle in his beautiful letter. Divinely beautiful, and none the

less inspired because it treats of the question of the conduct of a Christian master.

The first thing that strikes us in Paul is his unwillingness to use that authority which was rightly his. He had the liberty in Christ to command (see the 8th verse), but preferred to appeal in grace to the one who had suffered wrong. This is very beautiful, for there is none of the presumption of

"Man, proud man, Dressed in a little brief authority,"

in Paul. He is truly humble and unpretentious. And then again, in the 13th verse, there is the very opposite of selfishness. Paul would have liked to have retained Onesimus to have served, in Philemon's stead, with himself in the bonds of the gospel; but he sends back the slave, now become a brother in the Lord, with a message of grace which cannot fail to reach Philemon's heart. There is true Christian affection; and surely never such a recommendation to manumission as this (verse 16).

Then again, in the following verses, whilst the apostle counts fully upon Philemon's receiving Onesimus as himself (Paul), yet he is very careful that all should be rightly and justly settled; surely no one was ever more anxious than Paul "to be true and just in all his dealing." If there were any debt to be met it should certainly be paid, to say nothing of Philemon owing himself to the apostle.

All this is extremely beautiful, and much more might be said; but we may content ourselves, in a short paper, to notice the humility, unselfishness, and justice in the great apostle of the Gentiles, in a question where the grace of God had come in to bless, in an extraordinary way, a fugitive slave. What a wonderful thing is grace!

And now we may look a little at Philemon, whose house is opened to us in this epistle; there is enough in Paul's language to show us the true character of the man.

The 5th verse speaks of his love and faith toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints; the 7th of his love in activity, for he had been an instrument of refreshing others. The 16th verse, I think, shows the kindness of Philemon's heart, for no doubt the apostle had good reason for saying, "But how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord?" It is not going too far, perhaps, in comparing it with verse 11, to suppose that the master had thought much about his (once) useless slave, who now would be welcomed back—doubly welcome. This is what I meant in speaking of Paul's recommendation for Onesimus' liberty; we can well imagine how freely it was given and with what joy!

Then, in verse 21, his obedience was well known to Paul; not only a mechanical obedience, but one which proceeded from a heart ready and anxious to please the Lord, and to do more than what was required. And again, in the 22nd verse, there is a free invitation made by himself, on the apostle's part, and this of itself says much for Philemon; he evidently received the saints as he would have received the Lord. It is more than "lodging," it is rather "hospitality"; and the man in whose house the little assembly met received freely the Lord's servants.

All these things are very beautiful, for if we sum up

the short remarks made upon Philemon, we have faith and love, kindness showing itself to a slave become a brother, obedience, and hospitality.

It is a blessed thing that the Holy Ghost has thus given us to see within a Christian house, where the assembly met and where Paul had laboured; and to notice the terms upon which he, the great apostle, lived with the head of a Christian household.

It has often been noticed that Christianity does not pretend to change the state of society in this world (though Christian truths have had an immense influence outwardly upon society); the highest and most blessed truths, the full knowledge of God's grace and of His eternal counsels, instead of making the believer hard, or careless, in the relations of everyday life, make him wonderfully kind and considerate in all his ways.

Paul recognizes the master's right to have the slave back, and at the same time, with a delicacy which only grace can teach, sends him back as a brother—doubly blessed.

How blessed to find, in the midst of a pretentious and selfish world, the humility, self-denial, obedience, generosity, and other virtues which are the true fruits of grace! Surely the Lord would have us to show these things in our lives, and to be actuated by these same principles.

It is significant that the apostle says at the end, by the Holy Spirit, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit!" May that same grace characterize the households of all the saints!

In conclusion I would say, Was ever a more beautiful picture painted of an "interior"? May we admire and copy!

E. L. B.

NOTES OF A LECTURE.

LUKE XXII .- XXIV.

Our blessed path, while waiting for God's Son from heaven, is to feed upon Him as the living bread. In the midst of the toils, and tossings, and buffetings which belong to God's people in this world, where they must be for a little while, He gives Himself as the food of our hearts, and all that He was as a man here below becomes most precious to us. We must see Him crucified to be able to feed upon Him as the incarnate Saviour.

In the gospel of Luke you get the Lord Jesus

especially brought before you as the Son of man. I have often remarked the contrast there is between John's gospel and Matthew's. In John's gospel He is the Son of God—a divine Person. Whether in Gethsemane or on the cross you get no suffering at all. It is the same scene, and you will find that, when the band of men come to take Him, He says, "I am He." They fell to the ground when they heard this, and if He had walked away He might have left them lying there; but He gave Himself up freely to them, and shows His loving care of His disciples by saying, "If ye seek me, let these go their way." He puts Himself forward in the gap that they might escape.

When on the cross you do not get in John's gospel any mention of "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" He gave up His own Spirit. He said, "It is finished: and He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost." In Matthew you get the other side in Gethsemane, "If it be possible,

let this cup pass from Me," &c.; and on the cross, "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

When I turned to Luke, I was struck in reading what might appear a difficulty to the mind. It brought out Christ in a special way, so I speak of it now. In Luke's gospel you have more suffering in Gethsemane than in any other gospel, and on the cross none at all. Why is this? Why do I find Him on the cross above it all? It brought home to my soul all the blessed truth of how thoroughly He was man, "Handle Me,

and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have." He would have us remember this. He

wants us to recollect for the precious comfort of our souls how perfectly He is man. (See chap. xxii. 39.) He went as He was wont to the mount of Olives, and when He was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast He kneeled down and prayed. In Luke you find Him constantly praying as man. Perfect man, obedient and dependent. We get Him all night in prayer to God in Luke vi. 12. We get Him again going up into a mountain to pray, and as He prayed He was transfigured. (ix. 28.) Here He prays, saying, "Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup." Mark, then, how in this gospel you get more development of the sufferings of Christ in Gethsemane than in any other.

"Being in an Agony He prayed more earnestly." The

more He felt the depths of this dreadful cup the more earnestly He prayed. With us too often the trouble that fills our minds turns us away from God, but it drew His soul out as man more earnestly, and brought Him to God. "His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.... And when He

... was come to His disciples, He found them sleeping for sorrow." The poor disciples were sleeping for sorrow, while He was praying more earnestly in an agony.

We have here a threefold picture of man. In the disciples we see what man is in his infirmity; in Judas, man in his hatred and wretched wickedness; and in Christ, man in His perfection. When we come to the cross we find no trace of the agony or sorrow. He had gone through it all in spirit in Gethsemane, and He is above it all. (I am not speaking now of His atoning work, for we do not get that here.) There is no mention of the cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Here I find the perfectness of Christ as man. "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." You have the perfect unclouded consciousness of the Man giving up His spirit in full confidence to His Father. You see that characterizes all that Christ was on the cross. (See chap. xxiii. 34.) We see Him entirely above all the circumstances by which He was surrounded, so completely above them that His occupation is with others. His first word is, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

The wretched malice and wickedness of man had led Him to His crucifixion, but the poor Jews did not know what they were doing.

It is not judgment here, not simply a divine Person suffering as a man yet above it all, but one who could say, "Father, forgive them." Go through all the insults here recounted which they heaped upon Him. They parted His raiment and cast lots; they derided Him, saying, "He saved others; let Him save Himself?" The soldiers also mocked Him, and the very malefactors railed on Him, and what do I find? That He is

above it all. He can turn to the poor thief beside Him with these words, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." There was a blessed work going on in the poor malefactor's heart when he said, I am dying, and You are dying, but "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom."

The Lord could tell this poor thief To-DAY, though he

had asked Jesus to remember him when He returned in His kingdom. He believed in the kingdom when the King was rejected. Blessed faith! But the Lord was now showing the present place He was taking as man, and that he should not wait for that day of manifested glory, but that very day he should be with Him in paradise. Blessed compassion of the spirit of the man Christ Jesus.

"And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a

darkness." In this gospel the blessed truth in Matthew and in Mark is passed over when He uttered that wondrous cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Here we find that "when Jesus had cried with a LOUD voice" (which is specially noted here), He said, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit," shewing, as a man, perfect faith and confidence in His Father. If we have seen Jesus at the right hand of God, we can say as Stephen did, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit"; but He could say, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." This blessedness He had as man, that passing through the bitterness of the cup of wrath, we see Him go into its fullest depths. The agony such that His sweat was as it were great

drops of blood, yet He passed through it all with God,

so that when He came to the cross we find no mention of suffering. He is above it all!

In a certain sense this is our place, if we could only be like Him. In our little conflicts and little sorrows. if we go through every trial with God beforehand, as He did, we shall have all settled according to God, and be really above the trial when it comes. Ours are little trials, no doubt, when compared with His; still they test us and try us; but the principle is the same. We have to follow in His steps. He had but one path, and whatever the sorrow or trial may be, if we could only go on through it with God, even if it put us into an agony as it may (for presenting it to God makes it more acute), still, if I carry my agony to God, I shall be quite above the circumstances, having gone through them perfectly with God. As we see in the epistle to the Hebrews, chapter ii., He was the perfectly tried One, but always perfect in the trial. All is perfect in Him, and it does us good to meditate upon Him; to study what Christ was. "He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him." If we want to be like Him, we must see Him as the bread that came down from heaven. In studying what Christ is, we are taught by the Spirit of God. If you want to get the graciousness of Christ, if you want to grow in likeness to Him, you must feed upon Him. "Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

The Lord give us to feed upon Christ, and to dwell continually with Him, to get our hearts filled with the consciousness of what the Lord was, that we may be able more and more to understand the love and grace of God!

J. N. D. (1868).

"THE ABSTRACT;"

OR, THE NEED OF ABSTRACTION IN CONNECTION WITH WORSHIP.

THESE words (the 'abstract' and 'abstraction') are only human, and therefore of no importance in themselves, but what they convey is of all importance. God, and the way (at any time) that He has been pleased to reveal Himself, is the basis of our worship. Whether in Old Testament times or now, this is so. Worship is the soul finding its delight in God as revealed. Hence there can only be worship as the soul is under the control of the Holy Spirit, and abstracted thus from things here.

Now a new order of man has come in, and a new Man is before God in Christianity, and the Holy Spirit is in us in order to bring us into present enjoyment of all God's thoughts respecting Him. The subject of the Spirit's testimony, as I understand it, is CHRIST. "He shall glorify Me," the Lord Himself said ere He left this world. As we are by the Spirit filled with God's thoughts respecting Christ, and respecting ourselves as "of Him"—of the heavenly One—("As is the heavenly One, such also the heavenly ones." New Translation), we worship, and then we seek to be in moral conformity to Him here.

For worship, abstraction is an absolute necessity. We are desirous of worshipping "in spirit and in truth," because for such worship we are fitted, and it is also what the Father is seeking. (John iv.) But the first man is in every particular the exact opposite and con-

trast to the Second. I am privileged to turn away from that man. Opposites can only be considered when we separate them, and treat each on its own base and in its own relations. Therefore, as I see it, unless the Spirit work abstraction in the soul there can be no worship. Since we must consider opposites separately, when we are considering the one it must be with us as if the other had no existence. But if I refuse the second Man it is a denial of Christianity. Also, if I reject the first man (and I have my warrant for doing so now since God has rejected him), I am on Christian ground; that is, I am on the only platform on which there can be now this worship of the Father. This is what I understand by "abstraction," and though the word has not (like Trinity) any place in Scripture, the thing is there, and, I think, should be respected and desired

How much there is in us which hinders all worship. We are not at all times free in our souls of that which God can never tolerate nor recognise. Yet this is at all times our proper element-what we may call our "native air." We forget that "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." The "truth" is all out now, as to what God can accept at our hands, and in this "truth" we approach Him, knowing that He is "seeking such." If, through want of watching and praying, the soul is called upon again to condemn itself or others (even Christians) because of the actions of what God no longer owns or tolerates—this is not worship—though mingled in real sorrow with bitter tears and deep reality. No doubt it is the only right road to it, but it is not worship.

as a distinct work of the Spirit.

Abstraction is not merely mental, though no doubt the mind (or understanding) has a valuable place in it. It is that which is wrought in the soul, and can only be wrought therein, by the Spirit of God. It is only necessary to allow, or to provide for, the first man when we draw nigh to God, as if he had any present existence in God's sight, and our so-called worship becomes offensive to Him. There is then the dead fly in "the ointment of the apothecary," which not only destroys all the good odour, but is fertile in producing the bad—we have only a "stinking savour." (Eccles. x. 1.)

Oh that as Christians we might ever remember that

God has a NEW MAN before Him now, and that as "of Him" we are acceptable. "If the Lord delight in us," was the language of faith in a bygone day, a day of less light than we have, but from a soul that had no doubt of it! Think of God finding His "delight" in you and in me because of what He has made us, as of His new creation! New is not the old covered up-not the old re-doctored to suit this present year 1894. It is wholly new, from the core to the exterior shell. The Spirit would occupy us with this, which is all, every bit of it, in accordance with the mind of God. (2 Cor. v. 17, 18.) But let us remember that we cannot consider ourselves as of that which God has accepted, and as of that which God has rejected, at the same time. Hence, I believe the little worship, for we are apt to confuse these two things, if not in our meetings yet in our private life. Which is the truth? I ask, for on the ground of that only can we worship. May the Lord by His Spirit not only abstract us, but keep us abstracted. Amen.

H. C. A.

"THE NIGHT IS FAR SPENT."

I WISH, if possible, to awaken the thoughts of all readers to the force of the apostle's words at the end of the thirteenth chapter of Romans—"It is high time to awake out of sleep."

Perhaps a short retrospect up to apostolic times would be of service to our souls, for the night has advanced still since the Holy Ghost aroused the Roman saints. The hands have moved on upon the dial-plate, and are now pointing very nearly to that hour when dials shall vanish and be no more. The day is at hand, the day when the glory of the rejected Christ shall shine through the universe, and when those who have been faithful to Him through the long night, shall reign with Him in splendour.

Let us understand clearly the force of the expression, 'the night,' for I believe it to be important in this pretentious age for Christians to get back to the simple expressions of the early times (I mean early in the true sense, the times of Peter and Paul), and to understand what the Holy Spirit says of the present testimony. In the simplest language, then, we may say that at Rome, when Paul wrote, there was an assembly of justified saints called to live a holy life here by the Holy Ghost, and to await the day when they should reign with Christ; the present time was called the night. And it is night still, whatever may be said as to progress. The Roman believers were surrounded by the glories of Rome in her splendour; they were in

the very centre of the world, but they had nothing in common with it. Its works were the works of darkness, and they were called upon to put on the armour of light.

How many changes have taken place since then! The huge iron empire has fallen, the whole face of Europe has changed, the middle ages have run out, and the immense activities of man's mind, discoveries, inventions, have brought in the so-called enlightened state of the nineteenth century. All this is a part of the long night.

The history of Christendom too is most interesting, for God has worked both in restoring souls and in recovering truth, and that whilst the enemy was sowing tares, and carrying out his nefarious schemes. Much might be said about Arianism, the Eastern schism, the apparition of Mahomet, the history of the popes, the reformation, modern heresy* and unbelief; but the point is, that the whole of the world's history up to the appearing of Christ in glory is summed up in one short word—the night.

More than 1850 years ago Jesus died upon the cross between two thieves, and surely from that time, that is when the world crucified the Son of God, the very blackest darkness settled down upon this earth, and enveloped the whole system where man cultivates the arts and sciences without God. It is night. Is there not one ray of hope then for the world? Not one! It is very likely that this paper may fall into the

 Jerome said that the ancient philosophers were the patriarchs of heresy, and I think he was right in this, though he made many mistakes.

hands of some one who has not yet really understood

what the night means. I think many true Christians have not the true sense of it. It might be said, "But we are not in pagan Rome, nor in the dark middle ages; the world has become civilized, Christianized, and there is good everywhere!" Many have spoken to me thus; and I should always reply, "Yes, there are churches everywhere with the sign of the cross, just as there are mosques with the crescent, but how much real Christianity is there in Christendom?" And again, "Is it not too true that we are living in days when rampant infidelity is ready to throw off all restraint and the very name of Christ?" It is night.

Oh, beloved brethren, are we really awake? Much has happened lately to shake the slumber of the most sleepy. Our salvation is nearer than when we believed, and we are called upon to cast off the works of darkness, and to put on the armour of light.

"Are we to be fanatics, neglecting work and duties?"

No, the very contrary. There is an honest walk, as in day time; that is, morally enlightened and proof against the evil of the present age, protected by the armour of light. As the morning approaches (and oh how near it is!) the Lord would awaken His saints to be living lives which are a standing witness to the God who has justified and supremely blessed believers—the light bearing witness against the darkness. The enemy has succeeded in making black appear white on various occasions, but God is above all his power and deceit, and there is nothing which so much confounds him and his whole system as the walk of Christians clad in the armour of the light in the midst of the darkness, "The night is far spent, the day is at hand." E. L. B.

MOSES ON PISCAIL

DEUT, XXXIV.

I.

The sunshine sleeps upon the hills of Canaan's land,
The fruitful vales and bubbling, gushing streams,
As when on Pisgah's lonely height did Moses stand,
To view the prospect of his pilgrim dreams.

A land with milk and honey richly running o'er,
Whose city walls rose towering 'gainst the sky,
Where God's impartial hand yields bounteous store,
And, steeped in luscious richness, sunny vineyards lie!

Unrealized to nature its possession, but to faith,

His heart the dazzling landscape could embrace,

And whilst he stands, with eye undim and unabated strength,

He can God's promise and eternal purpose trace.

The conflict and the leadership are over now,

The burden and the heat of life's long pilgrim days;

And he, with spirit stilled and peace-sealed brow,

Knows disappointment merged in glorious praise.

The rod, endued with holy and mysterious power,

He yields submissively without a sigh;
God gives His servant, in death's calm and secret hour

The note of praise, the palm of victory!

II.

Here pause awhile! this vivid scene, has it no voice for us?

No lesson, Christian pilgrim, we may learn?

And whilst we meditate and commune on it thus,

Should we not feel our hearts within us burn?

We stand, not on majestic heights, as Moses stood,

But in the vale, to view our promised land— A vale of tears, where rolls death's mighty flood, A torrent, awful deep, no mortal can withstand.

But Christ has triumphed; a wider, deeper flood now flows— His love spreads forth in all its length and breadth and height;

Each soul by faith, now all His fulness knows, Each branch in Him may bear a precious freight!

To contemplate and gaze on Christ will bring
Rich fruitfulness to each believer's heart;
In Him such varied treasures cluster round and spring,
That admiration lends a captive willing part.

In Christ such deep attractions and such luscious fruits are seen,

Such streams of mercy and such palms of victory, Such floods and founts of love our hearts to wean, For Christ possesses all and loves eternally.

Then stand with Him, thy heavenly portion taste, Communion with Himself unveils all mystery; His grasp of love forbids all needless haste, And, lost in Him, my soul! lose all identity.

B. B.

SCRIPTURE NOTES.

T.

GALATIANS v. 24.

THE law and the flesh go together; and the application of the law is the provocation of the flesh. As Paul has elsewhere written, "I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet," This accounts for the fact that the revival of the law among the Galatians was attended by a very vigorous manifestation of the works of the flesh. (See vv. 15-26.) As a corrective, the apostle shows first that power has been given in the Spirit to resist and overcome the flesh. "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh;" then, that the Spirit and the flesh must of necessity be in everlasting antagonism; they "are contrary the one to the other;" not that "so that ye cannot," but "that ye should not, do the things ye would." The flesh, that is, always opposes the action of the Spirit, and the Spirit always resists the desires of the flesh. Then Paul reminds the Galatians that if they were led of the Spirit, as they doubtless claimed, they were not under the law, as they were insisting through their love for Thereon the apostle presents a concircumcision. trasted description of the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit. Put these two catalogues, he seems to say, in parallel columns, and then ask yourselves to which, as to your practical walk and conduct, you belong. And then, to leave them without a single excuse, he tells them, "They that are Christ's have SCRIPTURE NOTES.

crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." Does he mean that every Christian has done this? This were to miss the whole point of the observation. What he signifies is rather that to have done this is the distinguishing mark of a Christian, that it belongs, it might almost be said, to the very claim to be Christ's, and, certainly, that it indicates the normal state of the believer. This will be perceived at once when it is noted that it is not God's action here, but what "they that are Christ's" have themselves done. It is thus beyond a question that "crucified" in this scripture has a practical bearing—that it implies the application of the cross to the flesh with all its "passions" and lusts.

11.

Galatians vi. 14.

IT would almost seem that Paul was about to close his letter at verse 11. He returns, however, to his subject for a moment, and, summing up the evil principles at work, presents them, not now as springing out of law, but in their relation to the world. Those who contended for circumcision desired, he says, "to make a fair shew in the flesh," and their object was, "Lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ." Moreover they desired to have the Galatians circumcised, that they might "glory" (boast) in their flesh. (vv. 12, 13.) They were thus governed by worldly principles, seeking to please and to have a place in the world. In contrast with all this the apostle exclaims, "God forbid that I should glory" (boast), "save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Paul had been delivered from the world, as well as from the law, by the cross of Christ. He saw by faith its judgment therein, and the world was consequently a crucified thing in his estimation; and he, on the other hand, looked upon himself as crucified with Christ, and hence as crucified to the world. It is, in fact, a double application of the truth of the cross, to the world and to himself. The following remarks will be helpful in this connection: "The cross declared two things: it told what man was; it told what God was, and what holiness and love were. But it was the utmost degradation in the eyes of the world, and put down all its pride. It was Another who had accomplished it at the cost of His own life, bearing all possible sufferings; so that the apostle could give free course to all the affections of his heart without boasting himself of anything; on the contrary, forgetting himself. It is not self we glory in when we look at the cross of Christ: one is stript of self. It was He who hung upon that cross who was great in Paul's eyes. The world which had crucified Him was thus seen in its true character; the Christ who had suffered on the cross in His likewise. In that cross would the apostle glory, happy, by this means, to be dead to the world, and to have the world ended, crucified, put to shame, as it deserved to be, for his heart. Faith in the crucified Son of God overcomes the world." Upon this the apostle declares a truth of the highest import, and one which, when received, carries us into a region totally outside the law, the flesh, and the world. "In Christ Jesus," he says,

"neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncir-

cumcision, but a new creature" (creation).

III.

JOHN IV. 10.

THE expression, "The gift of God," in this scripture, signifies that God is a giving God, the God of grace, but the God of grace, with special reference to the truth of this gospel, in the bestowment of eternal life. This is made plain by the close of the verse. After our blessed Lord had said to this poor woman, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink," He proceeded to add, "thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water." The last half of the verse is therefore a full explanation of the foregoing words. And it should be observed that the Lord does not say, "Thou wouldest have asked of God," but it is of Himself. Thus He, the wearied Man that sat on the well, is unveiled before our eyes as the God of grace, the Giver of the living water "springing up into everlasting life." It is one of the scriptures out of which shine the full rays of His divine glory before the opened eye.

Then, moreover, for the further understanding of this scripture and the following verses, the difference should be observed between the "living water" and "everlasting life." The former signifies, as may be seen from chap. vii. 37–39, the Spirit as the power of life; the latter points, in its full and heavenly sense, to the enjoyment of fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ—as following upon the revelation of the Father in and through the Son, and our being brought into the Son's own place and relationship in association with Himself. The former is thus the capacity for the enjoyment of heavenly things.

THE CHARGE TO THE ELDERS OF EPHESUS.

ACTS xx. 17-38.

ALTHOUGH the Lord wrought much and mightily through His servant after Paul's address to the Ephesian bishops,* it is yet true that this marked the termination of his free activity. Immediately after, animated by his intense affection for his "kinsmen according to the flesh," he proceeded to Jerusalem. There he was taken prisoner while in the very act of seeking to appease the prejudices of the Jewish believers by conforming himself to Jewish legal customs. It was an astonishing thing that the apostle, who had so boldly and faithfully confronted and withstood Peter at Antioch, "that the truth of the gospel might continue with" the Galatian believers, should himself fall into a like error at Jerusalem. The Lord could not, consistently with the truth committed to Paul's stewardship, allow this lapse from grace to succeed in its object. He permitted His servant therefore to be arrested, and, in the issue, to be carried a prisoner to Rome, while He graciously overruled His servant's failure for the accomplishment of His own purposes. He used the apostle in captivity to write the most precious (if it be right to distinguish between what is equally inspired) of all his epistles.

^{*} The word translated "overseers" in v. 28 is really "bishops," furnishing an unanswerable proof that, in the apostolic church, "elders" and "bishops" were but different designations for the same office.

The fact we have mentioned gives great importance to this closing address of the apostle, an importance which never diminishes in the progress of the church in her appointed path, but which rather increases as the end so manifestly draws near. In our last paper we saw how his labours had been blessed at Ephesus, and how Satan had used every effort and artifice to interrupt him in his service. He was strengthened however to fulfil his mission, notwithstanding all opposition: and then, after having affectionately embraced the disciples, he departed into Macedonia. With the spiritual energy that marked this devoted servant, he went "over those parts," "came into Greece," returned through Macedonia, visited his beloved Philippi, and went to Troas, where on the first day of the week, "when the disciples came together to break bread," he "preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight." The power of the Spirit was also displayed through him there by the restoration of Eutychus, and also in the intense activity of the next few days (see vv. 13-15) before reaching Miletus. It was from this last place that he "sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church" to furnish them with divine guidance and instruction for the evil days that were coming.

First of all, the apostle was led of the Spirit to pass under review the character of his own ministry while at Ephesus. "Ye know," he said, "from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons." The work of every servant is under the eye of God, as well as to some extent under the eyes of those amongst whom he is labouring; and

happy it is for him when, as in this case, he can, with a good conscience, remind the saints of its character. The next verses (19-21) show us what marked it: "humility of mind . . . many tears, and temptations" because of the deadly enmity of the Jews; the keeping back of "nothing that was profitable;" incessant service, both in public and in private; and the testifying alike to Jews and Greeks of "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." What a record! And let us lay it well to heart that it commences with his state of soul—serving the Lord with all humility of mind. He was thus a true follower of his divine Master, who was meek and lowly in heart, and, in calling our attention to it here, the

Spirit of God would teach us that without this humility of mind no true service can be rendered to the Lord.

Next, he tells them of his purpose to go to Jerusalem,

that he felt bound "in the spirit"—in his own spirit, that is, not in the Holy Spirit—to undertake this journey. A shade of apprehension seemed to rest upon his soul while making this communication, for he added, "not knowing the things that shall befall me there: save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me." Courageous servant! Governed perhaps in this instance by his affections rather than by the Spirit of God, he is willing to do all, and to dare all, even to be made

conformable to the death of Christ, if he may but be permitted to finish his course with joy and fulfil his ministry; and his desire was realized. (See 2 Tim. iv. 6-8.) Together with this, having told them that they would see his face no more, he called them in

88

as his witnesses, that he was pure from the blood of all, for he had not shunned to declare unto them all the counsel of God. As a watchman, as well as a servant, he had been faithful to God and to their souls.

Led of the Spirit of God to hold up his own example for their imitation, he proceeded to found thereon an appeal to themselves; and let every one who holds any position of responsibility among the saints of God ponder well and prayerfully its terms. "Take heed therefore"—to be diligent in your work? No, but "unto yourselves." As he afterwards wrote to Timothy, it is, first of all, "Take heed unto thyself," This is the primary responsibility, the neglect of which has rendered so many servants powerless, and has caused so many shipwrecks. (1 Tim. i. 19.) Having taken heed to themselves, they were then to care for all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost, not man, had made them overseers (bishops), and to feed the church of God so dear to Him in that He had purchased it with the blood of His own.* The apostle thus supplied these elders with the most powerful motives to diligence and fidelity in their service, motives which sprang from the origin of their office, from the fact that the church belonged to God, and that He had acquired it at no less a cost than that of the precious blood of His own beloved Son. He helped them in this way to understand also that the magnitude of their responsibility was but the measure of their unspeakable privilege.

It is not necessary to discuss this translation here; it will suffice to say that it accords best with the teaching of Scripture, and that the original language permits it.

This solemn charge was evidently given in view of the following warning, "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." (vv. 29, 30.) Two sources of danger were thus indicated from without and from within. Wolves from without would seek to harass and scatter the sheep (see John x. 12); and professors within, departing from the truth and teaching error, would form "schools of opinion," sects and parties, and thus divide the flock. Sad prospect! But how fully, alas! it has been realized, for the state of the professing church at the present moment entirely answers to this description. What then were these elders to do in view of the evil days? They were to copy Paul's example, and just as he had, during three years, "ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears," so they were to labour with all earnestness to tread in his steps. Such a ministry might not indeed be acceptable, for the people of God, like Israel of old, prefer those who prophesy "smooth things," but the path of the true servant must be governed alone by fidelity to his Lord, whose approbation must suffice for his encouragement.

Where, then, should these elders find their resource in such an evil day? About to be bereft for ever of the apostle's presence and guidance, and with the anticipation of so many difficulties, where could they obtain the needed support and wisdom? The apostle, divinely instructed, made full provision for their future perplexities in the words, "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace,"

90

&c. In like manner Moses, on the eve of his departure, gave the Levites the book of the law, in this case to be a testimony against them when, after his death, they should have corrupted themselves, and turned aside from the way he had commanded them. (Deut. xxxi) Peter, moreover, endeavoured that the saints, after his decease, should always have "these things" (which he committed to writing) in remembrance. (2 Peter i. 12-14.) In the mouth of these several witnesses therefore it is surely established, as an allimportant principle, that God Himself, and the word of His grace, are all-sufficient for His people in the darkest days of their history. God Himself (not any successor of the apostles) is able to sustain them at all times, and to succour them in all their conflicts, and out of all their distresses; and the word of His grace, which is able to build them up, and to give them "an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." contains all the requisite wisdom to direct them in His

Once more the apostle reminds the elders of his own example. Before their eyes he had lived out the pattern they were to copy. No covetousness had found place in his heart; but rather with his own hands, as they knew, he had ministered unto his necessities and unto those of his companions. He had done this that they might learn the blessed privilege of labouring in like manner to support the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Touching reminder! teaching so plainly that unless we are in the power of grace, we cannot truly be

own path, and according to His own mind.

servants of Him who "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." What farewell words! "And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all." The effect was that "they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed ["ardently kissed"] him," with the kisses of an overwhelming affection, "sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more." With such holy emotions in their hearts they accompanied the apostle into the ship, and there they for ever parted. But inasmuch as God has caused the address they had received to be recorded in His word, we may be sure that it was retained likewise in their hearts; and we may perhaps conclude, from the state afterwards of the assembly at Ephesus, as seen from Paul's epistle, that it moulded their lives and governed their conduct in shepherding the flock, and tending the church of God, over which the Holy Spirit had made them overseers.

THE OPPRESSOR AND THE SAVIOUR.

1 Samuel xvii. 57; xviii. 1-4; John x. 11.

THERE are evidently two parts in the gospel—one is the misery you are brought from, and the other is the position you are brought to. If you do not know the position you are brought to, you are not sure that you are brought from your lost estate. Many are truly converted, but they are thinking only of getting out of the debtor's prison. You might be set free and yet be poor and sorrowful though owing nothing. That is not the gospel. The gospel is, not only that you are

92

cleared of all that is against you, but that you are brought into the most unspeakable blessing in the very place of your misery, not merely when you come to heaven. Many Christians are looking for earthly blessings. They have touched the first part of the

faith, had access into the favour of God that the believer in Christ is as Christ is; this his position—his Saviour is his portion. The One who saved you from misery is now your life and portion in the place of your former misery. I say all this by the way of preface.

Now let us look at these scriptures. All Israel

gospel, but not the other part; they have not, through

were under an oppressor. If you go into the town and say to a man, "Are you clear of the oppressor?" "What oppressor?" "Death. Death is on every man." Now, if you are not clear of the man who has death on him, you are not clear of the oppressor. "By man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead." You want to be clear of the man where the oppressor is, and you want to be as the One who has removed the oppressor on the earth-on the very spot, on the battle-field, where the oppressor had been. Some say, "I cannot be sure till I get to heaven." Others can say, "I am sure my sins are gone." But have you found unspeakable resources in Christ here before you go to heaven? Oh, you say, if that were true, I should be the happiest man on the earth-"Joy unspeakable and full of glory"; it is not earthly joy. Now here Israel were in this terrible position. David's father sent him to see how his brethren fared. The type is beautiful. What a sight presented itself to our blessed Lord!

was sent by His Father. "God so loved the world, that He sent His Son." And what did He find? Every man oppressed by death. In the type David addresses himself to the fight, overcomes the

Philistine-the oppressor-and cuts off his head with his own sword. He is then seen with the head of Goliath in his hand. He has done the work. I do not present Christ to you doing the work; I say the work is done. It is thus that Jonathan sees Davidthe head of Goliath in David's hand. "Himself hath done it."

jailer, in great distress of soul. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Where is He? He is risen. It is as the Lord He was presented to this poor sin-stricken soul. The work is done. The oppressor is dead. Now is there any one in this room who does not know that the oppressor is gone? Would it not be a wonderful moment

Mark how Paul addresses the poor pagan Philippian

for you if you could say, "The oppressor is gone?" Christ entered unto death that "He might destroy him that had the power of death." The oppressor is gone. I fear there are a great many Christians who are not as happy as Jonathan was. Jonathan could say, "The oppressor is gone." "He (Christ) has abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light." Christ has overcome death as David had the head of Goliath in His hand. Saul represents the religious man, and as the religious man he asked him, "Whose son art thou?" He was grateful. I

don't like gratitude merely; gratitude means, "I would do as much for you." Look at Jonathan, he loved David as his own soul. Now you see where he is, the oppressor is gone. Jonathan makes acquaintance with the true king of Israel, he did not know him fully, but he loved him as his own soul, and not that only, they made a covenant together-there was an understanding between them. That is what I call the confirmation or seal of conversion. It is a wonderful moment when there is a covenant between me and my Saviour, a conscious bond with Him, which is the sealing with the Holy Ghost. I see a man who has assurance of forgiveness, he is singing of the virtues of the work of Christ -that is his hymn. I watch him when he advances. I find he has changed his hymn, he is praising the Saviour. That man has made a good step, has he not? But I want to press on you that Jonathan made a covenant with David-he loved David. Love likes to make little of oneself in order to make much of its object. The woman in Luke vii. brought the fragrant ointment, which would have added importance to herself, and anointed the Lord with it. Here is the king's son, the heir-apparent to the throne, as we say, and see how he confesses his love. "And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle." (1 Samuel xviii. 4.)

all this was done in the very spot where the oppressor had prevailed. Jonathan has found a friend. David is the delight of his heart, in the very spot where he had been oppressed by Goliath—a wonderful exchange.

I turn now to John x. 11. We find the Lord here stating, "I am the good Shepherd: the good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep." It is not merely caring

Jonathan treats David as the one entitled to be king;

for them, He gives His life for them. Now consider the work of the Son of God. He became a man, He saw the oppressed condition of man, and before He came He says, "A body hast Thou prepared me." Blessed be His name! How wonderful to know that the Son of God can look down upon the trouble and misery here and say, "I come to do Thy will." Hence the Lord says in John iv., "I have meat to eat that ye know not of . . . My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work." We can marvel to see this Shepherd, the Son of God, sent by His Father to see how His brethren fared, His heart moved to come down and assail this terrible giant. He is the antitype of David. God's Son become a man, born of a woman, that He might "redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." He would sever us from that man on whom the judgment of God lay. Not only are sins to be atoned for, but death-the judgment-is on every one. If you never had committed a sin, if you were a babe, death—the judgment of God-is on you as a child of Adam. The Son becomes a man. He goes down unto death—the judgment of God. You see God in judgment in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, having borne the judgment on man, and having glorified God in dying, He has risen from the dead, He is "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." "In that He died He died unto sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God." "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

Many believe on Christ as the sacrifice for their sins, but they are not consciously justified. They may have assurance that they will not be lost, but they do not enjoy acceptance with God. I ask you, Do you believe in Christ risen from among the dead?" "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." It is with Him risen that you have to do. He has abolished death, and has brought life and incorruptibility to light by the gospel." It is a great moment when you see Him risen from the dead. I remember a company of military men where I was once asked to speak on the Lord's coming. One officer said, "I used to go down on my knees to pray to the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross. One day a lady said to me, 'But He is not there.' This had a great effect upon me." Often the gospel preached does not go farther than Christ on the cross. You are not justified until you believe in Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. It is the rising which ensures justification-not merely the dying. The dying was for the offences; the resurrection is the receipt, and immensely more. Christ is become the firstfruits of them that slept. A man who has glorified God when bearing the judgment of death, has been raised from among the dead. I know when you believe this you will be greatly blessed; for we read, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead,

thou shalt be saved." He "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." Now I come to verse 14, as to the nature of the intimacy which subsists between the believer and the Saviour. I believe it is unknown until you have made acquaintance with Christ risen from the dead. It is Christ risen who is the delight of the heart. Hence the apostle says, "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection." Let me turn to a passage which will explain this intimacy. In chap. ix. 35, "Jesus heard that they had cast him out"—the man who was blind—"and when He had found him He said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is He, Lord, that I

Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee."

Now mark—I have tried first to show you that all the oppression has been cleared away; now I am presenting the source of full enjoyment—your position while on the earth. It is Christ Himself, and in the very place where the man once blind was. He has not only received sight, the darkness cleared

might believe on Him? And Jesus said unto him,

away, but the light was so effectual that he is cast out of the synagogue, outside everything humanly religious. Such is the effect of light. First his neighbours bring him to the Pharisees—the religious men. The Pharisees said, He is not of God because he has broken the Sabbath day. Then the parents say, "He is of age, ask him." They feared the Jews. It is not transgression here as in chap. viii.; in chap. ix. the light has come and has exposed the darkness in which the religious man was. Now the man who was blind is in the solitude of light. Would that many knew that experience, they would never forget it. You are outside of all that man reveres, in the solitude of light, but you will not long be lonely. Jesus heard that they had cast him out.

Blessed be His name! He comes to him, and says, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" He gave him the light. The One who has perfected your salvation becomes the source of all joy to you in the very place where He has cleared away all the darkness; you now can count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus your Lord. How blessed the solitude of light would be to you if you knew the wonderful resources which are in the Lord Jesus Christ. Some complain of being lonely! I am sorry for you, because you ought not to be lonely. Never less alone than when alone. Note the Lord's answer to this man, "Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee." The last time they met he didn't see Him, for he was blind. Now the Lord says, "Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee." Surely there is no one with any heart for Christ who would not have enjoyed that interview. Nothing in this world could equal it, and that is the intimacy which is referred to in verses 14 and 15 of chap, x. These two verses ought not to be divided. "I am the good Shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine, as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father." The simple meaning of the passage (I daresay some of you may not have looked at it carefully) is that the same kind of intimacy subsists between the believer and Christ as between the Father and the Son. That is the meaning of the passage. It is far beyond Jonathan and David when they made a covenant; now we are brought into the most unparalleled intimacy with the One who has saved us. The good Shepherd not only gives His life for the sheep, but He is our life and the resource of our hearts. I hope there is

no one in this room, even though he may not understand it, who will not admit that God's salvation is wonderful. You are not only freed from the oppressor, from the one upon whom the judgment of God lay, but the One who has accomplished your salvation is now and evermore in the deepest intimacy with you. I need not add more; but I ask each of you, Do you believe it?

J. B. S.

AN EXTRACT FROM A LETTER ON 2 CORINTHIANS.

"Fellowship" and the "common faith" are essentially one, and inseparable, moving together in a plane unknown to time or will of man. True to their original, they remain unaffected by accident, untroubled by offence, but at this time I rather think of characters furnished by occasions as they arise, and expressive of the reciprocities of the gospel. These of themselves may be said to be the theme, almost the staple too, of the particular scripture I have now before my mindthe second epistle to the Corinthians. They flow from the blessed fact, that, whilst as yet the veil is upon the heart of Israel, the privilege of us all is to look with open face upon the glory of the Lord, and the effect to be changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Lord the Spirit, for the radiancy of the knowledge of the gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, whilst rejecting all that is contrary to itself, supposes a community of interest ever displaying itself through hand, or heart, or word.

Read chapter i. 1-7 as an exquisite example of this; the sufferings, and equally the comforts of the apostle,

being made to pass over to his beloved children in the measure known to himself. They were indeed his epistle written in his heart, which in its throbbings yielded that which made them "of one mind" with himself. And I would ask, Who can with intelligence read to its end the section immediately succeeding (chap. i. 8 to ii. 13) if the heart be not in full consent and bowed in sympathy with the sympathies found there? (Mark iii. 1-4.) Who would not have his own part therein, and share with that blessed servant through the Spirit of the living God, that consciousness which assures him of like recompense on their part, and inspires him with the confidence (trust) which Christ alone can give? Again in chapter iv. 6, see him in the hand of the God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, and hath now shined in his heart, only that through him mediately and implicitly might pass to others the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Observe in verse 5 those three words "for Jesus' sake," and note their application to his subject. The gospel of the glory must not be veiled by will, or way, of man, and he that has seen it in the face of the Man Christ Jesus is bondsman to all others for His sake. Creation-glory is surely past to him who, looking on eternal things, sees Jesus only, and he is thenceforward only an instrument to make Him known. Verse 7 marks a transition to another form of truth connected with that Name, and here again it is all "for Jesus' sake," and to this end, that His pathway down here might be understood, being reflected in the sufferings of the servant who endures all things for His people's sake, still bearing about in his body the dying of Jesus, still delivered to death (morally a copy and continuation of Himself).

Thus these three pregnant words point at once to the seat of glory above, to the scene of suffering below, and to the ministry which would worthily portray either, and find its reward in answering affections and a common hope.

In chapter v. this intercommunion reaches its highest point, the saints themselves finding occasion to glory on the apostle's behalf, and the apostle (now beside himself, now sober) yields, in either case, to the constraining love of Christ according to the judgment bound upon him by the present truth of new creation.

In chapter vi. we have a ministry conformable to the

accepted time and day of salvation of verse 2, and in full and distinct detail; and Paul the minister would have his Corinthian children to throw off the weights of earth and hell, being enlarged to the refusal of all unequal yokes even as he, and to the simple consciousness that they were the temple of the living God—sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty.

Chap. vii. but rehearses and sums up the foregoing six

—historically the ground, morally the complement and declaration of their teachings. What exercises of heart! What exchanges of thought and loving desire are found here! What tender reciprocities and recollections are those which inspire the "confidence" in which he glories!

Chap. viii. and ix. are but the practical expression of it all, where with mutual obligation as a standard, and with "equality" as a rule, exhortation, example, service, prayer, and thanksgiving, are seen to mingle, and to make a well of general refreshment.

In the chapters which follow, though marked by striking contrasts with those that had gone before, the reciprocal relations remain undisturbed by circumstances, only manifesting themselves in a suited way.

An enemy had been at work perverting the gospel,

and in behalf of the truth, and of the interests of the saints, the servant that holds the true commission will use the power entrusted to him to the end of edification, though it be in "sharpness." The weapons of his warfare were spiritual, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, prepared to revenge all further disobedience. He will not spare, if he come, them that are his own children. And why? Because, if they would question his place and authority, they have but to examine themselves as to whether Christ, whom he had preached, was in them, except they be reprobates, but they shall know that he is no reprobate and their relative positions no myth. Those whose minds were in danger of being corrupted from simplicity as to Christ, he had espoused to Him, and his jealousy over them expresses itself in moods, and manners, and forms of speech wholly peculiar to the moment; for God only knew how he loved them.

The misguided minority in the assembly are hereby made to see in its elements, and applications, what is the ministry from which they would turn away—to what depths it can descend, to what heights it can rise. See him who is not a whit behind the very chiefest of Christ's apostles, laying down together all the insignia of his office cognisable to sense, his labours, stripes, etc., deeming himself a fool in speaking of them, even by

compulsion of those who should rather have commended him, though for their sakes he thereby takes away all ground of attack, and occasion of boasting, from others. Then in the record which succeeds again and beyond all this, we have a scene and an action in vivid correspondence with, and in fuller assertion of, the character we have seen him wear, and the place he has

assigned himself. Powerless in contact with power as in the hands of men, he celebrates his deliverance at Damascus, there, as in every place led of God "in triumph in the Christ," an instrument to set forth the odour of His knowledge, as being unto Him a sweet

odour of Christ in them that are saved and in them that perish. One step further and we have, in all its volume and intensity, the ministry which lies at the source of the varied manifestations we have witnessed,

and those tides of sympathy of which we are speaking. In chap, xii, we have the man in Christ, caught up he knows not how, where things are said not allowed

to man to utter. Well might he boast of such an one, yet boast he will not for the sake of others; for now at length he lies low enough to let the grace of the Lord suffice for him, and to take pleasure in the weakness which Christ clothes with His own power. Full of the abounding visions and revelations, suddenly arrested as in the heart of Paradise itself, and transpierced by Satan's messenger, the thorn for the flesh of which he speaks, he cries aloud therein for easement, but is only heard according to that answer which, leaving the infirmity untouched, supplies a countervailing force of quality and range commensurate with the message he is to bear, and the work appointed him. It is now indeed Christ in the man, and the man superior to all accidents of time, for through the excruciating pressure, and the lesson entailed upon it, he comes forth to us that competent minister of the New Testament whose sufficiency is of God, who faints not before corruption, nor quails before suffering and death. His doctrine and his course accordingly are one, necessarily telling upon all around, whatever the phases of circumstance, as we have seen throughout this epistle.

First of all then, as one that is dead to all fleshly aims and ends, motives and methods, he has nothing.

Secondly—passive in the midst of agitations—the wrath of foes, the solicitude of friends, he does nothing.

Thirdly—now positive through heavenly schooling, and the decision of a supreme moment, he is nothing.

Thus perfected, he simply asks of us that we "receive" him, and pass with him through the light and shade of daily life, and every field of Christian duty, in calm possession of that revenue of spiritual health and wealth he conveys to us, exercised in all true and seasonable affections, knowing joy and sorrow in their varied measures of height and depth for ourselves, and skilled in application of such knowledge to others, touching the sorrow with light hand that haply it be not overmuch and Satan get the advantage, and leaving the joy to abound to its own issues in goodness even of exceeding grace. May these things have their own weight and thereby their own influence. For—

"E'en of that fellowship unbroken
The same whereof at first I've spoken,
The Supper and the Rapture make the token."

H. W. H.

THE REMNANT IN JUDE.

JUDE 20-23.

No one can deny the conservative character of Jude's epistle; I mean by "conservative" the keeping of that which is good. Notice, for instance, the expression in the first verse, "Preserved in Christ Jesus;" and that in the twenty-first, "Keep yourselves in the love of God." It is the same word in both cases.

The apostasy is not far off, and, morally speaking, Christendom has left its first estate since many a long year. It is a serious thing to be living in an age when men are ready to throw off the very form of Christianity. Surely we cannot be blind to the fact that soon the mantle shall be discarded, seeing, as we can, to follow the illustration of the fable, the wolf's ear above the shepherd's cloak.

Departure from original estate, and utter contempt for all authority are the two great things which characterize this epistle; there is a kind of gradation, no doubt in the way of Cain, the error of Balaam, and the gainsaying of Core; for self-will and murder are followed by corrupt practice, and finally by open rebellion against God.

We are living, beloved brethren, in these last and evil days—days in which a "railing judgment" is lightly passed upon all established authorities, and when mockery is applied to true godliness.* Judgment must fall upon the whole scene; and Enoch, the seventh from Adam, had so foreseen the crisis, that he had said, "The Lord has come amidst His holy myriads," anti-

^{*} A few years ago a shocking parody of the book of Job was published in Italy, and was crowned with immense success: a significant mark of the times.

cipating the terrible issue of this world's history. We are not to be astonished at the state of things, for all has been foretold by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; and their prophecy has come to pass.

Let us look at the final exhortation, and notice the peculiar position and service of the little remnant amidst all the desolation around. There is one bright spot, as one may sometimes see one bright ray coming through the clouds in a dark and lowering evening landscape.

Building up yourselves on your most holy faith, and praying in the Holy Spirit, characterize the state, that is the state of keeping yourselves in the love of God,* awaiting the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. There is true edification and true prayer, not merely an assent to certain doctrines; and thus we are kept in the love of God, in His unchanging, infinite love, whilst we wait the day in which we shall enter into His glory, and be in our home for ever. Children of the day, we wait that moment when we shall be glorified, and shall be in the proper sphere of that life which we already have in the power of the Holy Ghost.

Notice that "mercy" characterizes this epistle; it is

Notice that "mercy" characterizes this epistle; it is displayed to us every day, and every hour, and shall crown our whole history upon earth, when the Lord shall come to take us out of this dark world, before Enoch's vision be accomplished.

It is very blessed when there is true building up and true prayer; it is not merely "by" or "through" the Holy Ghost, but it implies also a spiritual state, so that the prayers are truly for Christ's glory, even in the midst of all the evil of the last days. (Compare John xvi. 23, 24.) Then comes a special

^{*} See the note in the New Translation; it is the state they were to be in.

service, needing spirituality—the service of separating the precious from the vile.

Jeremiah, in the fifteenth chapter of his prophecy, was separate from the assembly of the mockers when Jehovah sent him to take forth the precious from the vile; and so, in Jude's epistle, there must be a state of spiritual vigour and communion (may we have more of it!), before we attempt to help others. I well remember many years ago trying to pull a lad out of the water, and falling into it myself.

Spiritual discernment is needed so as to be able to pluck out of the fire some who are in it; fear too, lest, in accomplishing this difficult work, one's own garment be stained. It is a wonderful and blessed service amidst all the corruption; and the conservation of a spiritual state, of the consciousness of God's infinite love to us, and of a sense of the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, are needed every moment of our lives, otherwise we should be overcome with evil.

Then the service shall end gloriously. The last two verses bring before us the power of the only God our Saviour, who is able to keep us and sustain us in a critical time, and a difficult service. We have been ourselves delivered, and He will use us, to the very end of our course, for the deliverance of others. May we have faith in Him. There will be loud shouts of joy when the victory shall be proclaimed before the universe; in the meantime may we depend upon our Saviour-God.

To Him that is able to keep you from falling (that is, without stumbling), and to present you faultless before His glory with exceeding joy (with exultation), to the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, might and authority, both now and to all the ages. Amen.

E. L. B.

THE LORD'S COMING.

SEE those clouds with glory beaming All across the azure sky, Jesus claims His own redeemed ones, And His shout proclaims Him nigh.

Hark! a voice, th' archangel's mission,
Saints awaked are upward led,
'Tis the trump of Him who raised
Jesus, Firstborn from the dead.

This the moment long expected,
Full of rapture and surprise,
Changed into His glorious likeness,
Jesus, Lord, to Thee we rise.

Oh, that meeting and that greeting, All His own brought home to rest; Glory, joy, eternal sunshine, With the One in whom they're blest!

These, the fruit of toil and passion, Ran the race and reached the goal, All their crowns are laid before Him, And His presence fills each soul.

"Unto Him who loved and washed us"
Saints proclaim with one accord;
Joy untold, and full of glory,
Fills the scene where Christ is Lord.

Thine and mine! The Lord of glory
To His Father doth present,
With exceeding joy, and faultless,
Those for whom the Son was sent.

And the place for them prepared,
Who can tell its length and breadth?
Th' love of God alone the measure,
Christ alone the height and depth.

SCRIPTURE NOTES.

I.

HEBREWS iv. 15.

No one who has examined this scripture can doubt that the translation of the last two words should be "sin apart," or "apart from sin." When our Lord said to His disciples, "Without me ye can do nothing," He used the word found here, and the sense is evidently, "Apart from me," that is, if the branch had lost its connection with, were "apart from," Christ as the vine, no fruit could be produced. The meaning therefore of our scripture is that our blessed Lord was, having become man, tempted in all points "like as we are," apart from sin. We have sin in us, and many of our temptations proceed from this source (see James i, 14, 15); but Christ (far be the thought!) had no sin, and consequently did not enter into the temptations that are connected with our lusts. context, moreover, points to this conclusion. The apostle is setting before us that our great High Priest is not one that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. Two things are thus made plainfirst, that he has in view the temptations that spring from our infirmities, not from our evil nature; and, secondly, that in all such temptations we can count upon the sympathy of Christ as the High Priest, inasmuch as when down here, learning obedience by the things which He suffered, He was "tempted in all things in like manner." This is the meaning of the hymn-

> "He knows what sore temptations mean, For He has felt the same."

For our sins we want not sympathy, but unsparing self-judgment and confession. The knowledge of this

To magnify the perfection of the life of our blessed Lord, as he was deluded into thinking, he taught that Christ had a sinful nature like ours, and yet never sinnedan error which is almost favoured in our translation. But such a doctrine was at once dishonouring to our blessed Lord, and destructive of the atonement, seeing that One, possessed of a nature in all respects like ours, could not have presented Himself as an acceptable sacrifice, without spot, to God. The importation of human thoughts into such a subject cannot but lead to the most perilous consequences.

1 John i. 1. IT is asked if the expression—"the Word of life"—

refers to the written Word. This is to miss the point and significance both of the words used and of their connection. John speaks of "that which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of $(\pi \epsilon \rho)$ the Word of life." It is true that he stops short of saying (and our hearts can understand it) "our hands have handled the Word of life"; but the next verse makes it, nevertheless, very plain that he alludes to the person of Christ, for "that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us," was brought down to earth, and displayed in, and through, the Son become incarnate. The term, "the Word of life," may be used because the living Word was the manifestation of the life. Thus, in the gospel, it is of the Word, who was with God, and who was God, that John says, "In Him was life," and also that He "was made [became] flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of

truth." In chapter viii., moreover, in answer to the question, "Who art Thou?" the Lord Himself replied,

"Even [the same] that I said unto you from the beginning," more accurately rendered, "Altogether that which I also say to you;" that is, His words were the perfect expression of who, and what, He was. The Word (in the phrase, the Word of life) cannot therefore be dissociated from Himself, for His word contained the revelation of Himself, and here of Himself as that eternal life which was with the Father, and which had now been brought down to earth, and manifested before the eyes of His disciples. (Compare John xiv. 9, 10.) It might thus be truly said that Christ Himself was

III.

the Word of life, even as He is afterwards described as

LUKE xxiii. 44-46.

"the true God, and eternal life."

Unless there be some degree of spiritual understanding and faith in the word of God, apparent contradictions are easily discovered. It is undoubtedly the fact that the rending of the veil is put after the death of our Lord in Matthew, and before it in Luke. But the careful reader will observe that Luke does not say, although he calls attention to the rent veil, that it occurred before the Lord "gave up the ghost," He puts this and the sun being darkened together without stating the order of the events, and then passes on to describe the Lord's closing act of commending His spirit into the hands of the Father as He departed. Matthew, on the other hand, evidently gives us the sequence of the events, for after the words, "Jesus, when He had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost," he proceeds, "And, behold, the veil of the temple was

rent in twain from the top to the bottom," etc. There is therefore no contradiction whatever, and not only so. but there is a divine reason for the difference in the two narratives. In Matthew Christ in His death is seen as the sin-offering. Matthew xxvii, is the fulfilment both of Psalm xxii, and Isaiah liii., and consequently the rending of the veil, coming as it did immediately upon His death, signifies the completion of atonement, and God's declaration of its acceptance. It was, so to speak, the divine announcement of the efficacy of the precious blood, which had opened up the way for the believer into the holiest (Heb. x. 19), and which would moreover set God righteously free to come out in the gospel of His grace to proclaim forgiveness to all who would receive the message. (Acts xiii. 38, 39.) In the gospel of Luke the characteristic presentation of our blessed Lord is that of the perfectly dependent Man. There is consequently no forsaking of God given in the details of His death. He is seen, rather, above all the circumstances through which He was passing. He prays for His persecutors, He saves the malefactor, and lastly, as before noticed, He finally, in perfect peace, commends His spirit into the hands of the Father. Doubtless this explains why the rending of the veil is put here before His death. It is that we might be permitted to see this aspect of the death of Christ, His death as the obedient and dependent Man, and in this aspect He dies in entire confidence, and in undisturbed peace. We may learn from this the danger of deductions from any one scripture concerning our Lord. It is only in the combination of all that the truth is found. It is on this account that God has given us four gospels. Let this be well weighed.

CALEB THE SON OF JEPHUNNEH. It is in connection with the sending of the spies to

search out the land of Canaan that the name of Caleb first appears. From the account given by Moses in Deuteronomy i., it is very clear that this mission was the fruit of the people's unbelief. Commanded to go up and possess the land (compare Deut. ix. 23), they came near and said to Moses, "We will send men before us, and they shall search us out the land, and bring us word again by what way we must go up, and into what cities we shall come." (vv. 21, 22.) The Lord met the people in their unbelief, and commanded Moses to send the men (Numbers xiii. 1, 2), not as approving the desire of the people, but as permitting them to carry out their purpose, so that, knowing all the consequences involved. He might use these for their chastisement and instruction. The folly of unbelief was never more manifest. The Lord had guided His people by the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, and now they will trust to the information the spies may bring as to the way they shall take. After so long an experience of the Lord's faithfulness, they think more of the wisdom of men than of His perfect knowledge. Alas! how often have we fallen into the same snare.

The spies were chosen at the commandment of the Lord, and among them were Caleb, for the tribe of Judah, and Joshua, the son of Nun, for the tribe

of Ephraim. For forty days they "searched" the promised land, and brought back with them a cluster of grapes from the brook of Eschol, together with pomegranates and figs, in token of its fruitfulness. All the congregation were assembled to hear their report. At the commencement they confirmed in every particular the word of Jehovah: "We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it." So far it was well; but no sooner had they stated what they could not deny, than the unbelief, which was lurking in their hearts, broke forth. "Nevertheless," they proceeded to say, "the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover (reserving the greatest difficulty to the last) we saw the children of Anak there"; and in a few additional words they sketched the location of the several nations. Remark, that they had not added anything to the information given them already by the Lord Himself; they had only looked upon the

obstacles to the conquest of the land with the natural eye instead of with the eye of faith. The consequence was they left Jehovah out, and measured the foes to be encountered by their estimate of their own strength instead of the Lord's. Instead of saying, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" the thought of their heart was, "How can we overcome such powerful adversaries?" The effect was disastrous; for their words evidently produced a dangerous agitation among the congregation.

At this juncture Caleb stepped forth, and, dissociating himself from his companions, "stilled the people before CALEB THE SON OF JEPHUNNEH.

the testimony which had been rendered; but he said,

"Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it." As the subsequent history shows, this was the language of faith begotten by confidence in Jehovah and His word. He knew that the

God who had brought them out from under the power of Pharaoh, with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, could bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of His inheritance. The utterance of his confidence in the Lord only intensified the opposition

of the natural mind, and the men that went up with

him said, "We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we." As boldness in testimony gives increased certainty, so the expression of unbelief augments its power. Caleb and the ten spies are striking illustrations of these principles.

The increase of the unbelief of the ten is most marked. They now brought up an evil report of the

land, which they had before described as flowing with milk and honey; and they magnified through their fears the greatness of the enemy. In the presence of the sons of Anak, they were in their own sight, they said, as grasshoppers, "and so," they added—what could be only a matter of conjecture—"we were in their sight." Unbelief, which is always contagious, infected all the congregation, and they "lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night."

in their sight." Unbelief, which is always contagious, infected all the congregation, and they "lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night." They murmured moreover against Moses and against Aaron; they bitterly complained that they had not died in the land of Egypt; they reproached Jehovah for all the straits and dangers which existed only in

their fears; and, finally, they broke out into open rebellion, saying, "Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt." On the borders of their inheritance, a land on which the eyes of the Lord always rested, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year (Deut. xi.), filled with doubts and apprehensions, they were ready to sacrifice everything in their forgetfulness of their God and Redeemer. Moses and Aaron, helpless in the presence of such a manifestation of evil, could only fall on their faces, in silent appeal to God, before all the assembly.

Joshua and Caleb were God's chosen instruments to stem, and to testify against, this torrent of unbelief. Expressing their horror at the sin of the people, they rent their clothes, and, raising their voices above the din and confusion that reigned in the congregation, they courageously reiterated their declaration that the land they had searched out was "an exceeding good land." They thus boldly contradicted the "evil report" of their fellows, and, in so doing, separated themselves morally from their company, and took their stand on the Lord's side. They also stated plainly the conditions of possessing the land. First, "If the Lord delight in us," they said, "then He will bring us into this land." In this they showed that they were in communion with Jehovah's mind. He did delight in His people, and they knew it, and consequently that all depended upon what He was, and upon His power, and not upon what the people were, or could do.* Secondly, they said, "Only rebel not . . . neither fear ye the people of the land." The children of Israel had

^{*} Compare the apostle's argument in Romans v. 8-10.

only to follow their divine Leader. And, lastly, they declared (what was the source of all their strength) that the Lord was with them, and therefore fear of the the enemy was needless.

Such were the simple conditions (conditions which are as applicable to-day as when they were propounded) under which alone the possession of the land could be obtained. Let them be well pondered, for they unfold the pathway into all spiritual blessing. If they be forgotten or refused, believers now, as well as the Israelites, will either turn back in heart to Egypt, or wander aimlessly in the wilderness, to their own sorrow and loss. But faithful testimony, when rendered before carnal minds, is never acceptable. Indeed, it cannot fail to arouse the bitterest hostility. The Lord's servants are apt to forget this, and to expect the favour and approbation of His people. So enraged were the congregation with Joshua and Caleb that they bade "stone them with stones." As with those who listened to Stephen, cut to the heart, and filled with hatred, they would fain have murdered the faithful witnesses. But the glory of the Lord appeared, in vindication of His servants, and for the punishment of His stiffnecked and rebellious people. What a contrast, as ever, between the Lord's estimate and that of man's! His favour rested on those whom the children of Israel would stone!

Passing over the details of the judgment pronounced upon Israel for their unbelief, our attention may be arrested by the approbation expressed as to Caleb.* "My servant Caleb," said Jehovah, "because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went, and his seed shall possess it." (Chapter xiv. 24.) This reveals how grateful to the Lord's heart Caleb's faithful testimony had been, pattern as he was of the remnant of another day who should keep the word of Christ, and not deny His name. He also exemplified the spirit of devoted discipleship in an evil day; he followed fully, and this became his distinguishing characteristic—a characteristic which Caleb himself delighted to accept and recall. Surely he was the Paul of the Old Testament in his whole-hearted fidelity and devotedness. Would that the consideration of his example might be used to stir up

many of us to tread in his steps!

Caleb and Joshua, spared in the judgment that was visited upon the guilty people, lived still; and both, according to the word of the Lord, crossed the Jordan, and shared, in their respective positions, in the victories of faith, when engaged in conflict with the enemy for the possession of the land. Coming to Joshua xiv., Caleb is again brought to our notice. He came unto Joshua in Gilgal to apply for the inheritance which the Lord had promised to him. His address is full of interest. First of all, he recalled the past (vv. 6-8); then he reminded Joshua (showing how he had treasured it up in his heart) of the promise made to him by Moses (v. 9); next, he

^{*} The reason that Caleb is so often mentioned alone, though Joshua had been equally faithful, is that Joshua becomes afterward a type of Christ as the leader in spirit of His people in their conflicts.

testified to the Lord's faithfulness in preserving him

alive, and in continuing to him his strength, through all his lengthened and varied experiences; and lastly, requesting the possession of his inheritance, he expressed his confidence that, if the Lord should be with him, he would be able to drive out the Anakim, and to take their cities, notwithstanding they were great and fenced, as the spies had reported. The assurance of the Lord's presence always adds courage to faith, and thus Caleb confidently anticipated the conquest of the enemy. Joshua blessed him, and gave Hebron to him as his inheritance "because that he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel." The man of faith must ever be foremost in the conflict with the enemy; but his victory is ensured. Once more Caleb is seen in the history of God's people. In the next chapter the narrative is given

people. In the next chapter the narrative is given of his expelling from Hebron the three sons of Anak, and of his giving his daughter Achsah "to wife" to Othniel his nephew, who had smitten and captured Kirjath-sepher. At her instance, and at the request of her husband, Caleb gave her a field, "a south land." Emboldened by his grace, on his further asking, "What wouldest thou?" she said, "Give me a blessing; for thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water." Caleb gave her the upper springs and the nether springs. In the land, warring in the power of the Spirit, and victorious over the enemy in the energy of faith, he walked in the truth of grace, and could thus be a giver. Springs of water would be, typically, life in the power of the Holy Ghost; and consequently, in figure, Caleb's gift would

comprise heavenly and earthly blessings—blessings characteristic of the heavenly and earthly people. The lesson for us is, that the one who maintains fidelity to God in walk and testimony, the one who rises to the level of his calling, is kept in spiritual power and becomes the most faithful representative of God—the God of grace—to all with whom he comes into contact. Indebted himself to grace for all that he possesses and enjoys, he will, being formed by it, become the exponent of grace in his walk and ways. He will be in the energy of the Spirit whether for communion, or for walk and testimony on the earth. All things,

moreover, are possible to him that believeth.

MATTHEW XXVI. 36-44.

WE are drawing here to the last scenes of the blessed

CHRIST IN GETHSEMANE.

Lord's life. He is here, the tested, but perfect, Victim, while, alas! the disciples again show what man is. But all only brings out the Lord's grace. It is not, as in John, a divine person above all, offering up Himself, nor the man overcoming in dependence all that pressed upon Him. Obedience and grace must be perfect in the true and spotless Victim. Death and the cup were there, and He must be put fully to the proof in His obedience. But He passes through it all with His Father, and yet can think of others who think but little of Him; for, as to them, it is the testing of the disciples more than what was special to Christ that is portrayed. He looked for their watching, and they failed Him.; But we have Jesus perfect in patient

obedience, Jesus perfect in referring all to His Father, though feeling, and when feeling, all He had to go through.

It is the perfectness of His mind, when His being a victim is in view, that is here specially brought before us. He takes all the disciples with Him to Gethsemane; and then, telling them to tarry there, while He went on farther and prayed, He takes Peter, and James, and John who had also been with Him on the mount of

John, who had also been with Him on the mount of transfiguration, and who had the place of pillars afterwards, and there all that was before the blessed One came upon His spirit. He began to be sorrowful and very heavy; He felt as man what He had to undergo; not mere pain or suffering, but the power of death weighed upon His spirit, weighed upon it as man, yet with a weight no man could fathom. Yet with what calm simplicity He tells it out! We ought to know it,

though it may be beyond our knowledge. "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." His need was there, and told out to hearts that ought to have felt it and watched earnestly, occupied with Him. He looked for this, for someone to have compassion. "Tarry ye here, and watch with me." Blessed Saviour! What ought the heart to have felt to whom it was said? Oh,

how should it have watched! But, alas! what are we? He went on to be alone there with His Father about

that which He could only enter into with Him, and which must be altogether with Him. He was perfect in referring it to His Father, and referring it to Him alone. There the solemn question must have its solution. There alone it could, and there alone His perfectness could bring it. He fell on His face and prayed, saying,

"O my Father," in supplicating earnestness, "if it be

and the holy desire to avoid it, the piety of soul which desired it (for it was all the repulsion of sin from God, and what our wretched souls had fallen into-what man was as departed from God, which He must take upon His soul if indeed He had to drink it, if He undertook our cause, and it was a holy desire to shrink from such a judgment and being made sin, even as bearing it before God), yet with perfect submission and obedience to His Father, whatever His will was; and to His Father He brings it there where it ought to be brought, alike perfect in desiring not to drink it and in obediently submitting to drink it, if it was His Father's will; and this was His second utterance, "If this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, Thy will be done." The no reply to His demand leaves His soul in the unclouded perfectness of the second

and third, for He was with His Father in the full and solemn sense of what it was, but with Him—He is occupied with it. How could it be otherwise? It ought to have been so. The disciples sleep, leaving

possible, let this cup pass from me." He should feel it fully, and He did; submission would not have been perfect else, but then His obedience and submission were perfect—"Nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt." In the perfect sense of the cup to be drunk,

Him alone with God. Where else could He have been with such a work, such a cup, before Him?

Now it is over, one can linger round this scene to learn His perfectness and love, the love we shall enjoy in brighter days when we shall see Him as He is; when He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. Yes, it is well; it was only right that He

should be alone with His Father then. It could have

been nowhere else, and He went naturally there, if I may so speak, for all His thoughts were perfect.

But where was he (let us think of ourselves) who was to go to prison and to death? With what touching grace the Lord calls up to view the strange inconsistency, and said to Peter, "What, could ye not watch with me one

said to Peter, "What, could ye not watch with me one hour?" Where was the strength that was going through everything just now? Yet with what grace He warns, with what grace He excuses: "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is

willing, but the flesh is weak." How must one have hated oneself for such a want of earnestness and love

to Him. Alas! how we have to do with it. But here so perfectly is He with His Father for the depth of what was before Him, so perfectly had He had all that with Him only, that His free, unhindered grace could in all liberty be as perfect towards His poor feeble, but failing, disciples-no weight on His spirit with them. that was borne with His Father. How perfect are all His ways! What could they be else? But He can warn them, and warn them as to what was just going on. To Him it was now the path of obedience; but what was not that was temptation. So indeed with everything, all we meet with is occasion of temptation or obedience, only there brought out where all was brought to a crisis with man. But this intercourse with the disciples at this moment is a witness of a depth and calmness in His path which is divine perfection, though

in man and in human ways and grace which call for adoring recognition. We struggle, or faint, or hide our sorrow in pride. I have known what it is not to know relief till I said, "O my God, my soul is cast down within me." But He has all with God, and can state it.

as to fact, in perfect simplicity to man. We cannot tell our grief, we need support, and where are we to trust if it be heavy? He had His resource so elsewhere—all His heart out, looking to His Father—that He could confide where really there was nothing to lean

Now this is greatness only in perfection, yet in lowliness, not in self-sufficiency, in conscious weakness of humanity, but all told in perfect faith and depend-

on, only truth of heart-the spirit was willing.

ence to God His Father, yet never losing His human place; rather it is the expression of it. It is here it comes out so perfectly, never a thought that was not human indeed, but never one that was not suited to such a place in the presence of God; that is, to death and drinking the cup; yet, though a man's feelings are there in view of it, not one but what was according to the perfectness of One in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily. It would not do that He should not have been fully in conscious manhood there, for He was there for us; nor that in that place a thought or a feeling that was not divine in its fitness for it should have been there, and so it was. He was not drinking the cup, but He had to feel it as to all that it was, and feel rightly about it. Had He not been God, as well as man, that could not have been. Surely He

necessity before God.

Blessed Lord, I do not pretend to fathom what Thou wast. Who could? But we may learn from it, and adore in our hearts; we may look on and learn who was there, and with thankfulness of heart. No man

could not have drunk it else, but He could not have thought about it adequately, if a divine source and measure of thought had been the spring of it in man's knows the Son but the Father; but, oh, what traits of paramount blessedness flow forth from this Son being a man! And we shall see that very Man as He is (and who shall tell the joy of that?), yet He is as perfect in gracious gentleness to man. What it must have been to them when they had the Holy Ghost to look back to, and when they knew themselves in their flight from, that which He was going to meet! Humbling surely, but a great thing for a heart to have been

are where Christ was, save, of course, atonement, and even there in respect of guilt to know the perfectness that is in Him. It is not by our minds, but in looking at perfectness in the same place in our weakness. Who will know strength like the weak one that leans on it? Still we know it as taught of God as He in the perfectness of His person.

J. N. D.

thus humbled; for, after all, we must learn what we

"JOHN BAPTIST'S HEAD IN A CHARGER."

How solemnly in the word of God is the world exposed, and its true character set forth! Not with all the revolting details of a newspaper, which defile the mind, but in all its terrible principles. Such an exposure is before us in the story of King Herod and John the Baptist.

In a man of great worldly position the principles of the world come out more fully, because he has scope for carrying them out, being able to act so largely according to his own will without restraint of others. In this incident are clearly exhibited "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." (1 John ii, 16.) And the manifestation is the more

striking because of being in one who had heard John gladly, and had done many things. (Mark vi. 20.) Yet, whatever his reformation may have been, he was under the power of a sinful connection, and when John reproved him on account of this, he cast him into prison. However he might delight in hearing John, he would brook no interference in this matter. Indeed, so enraged was he that he would have killed him, only that he feared the people by whom John was accounted a prophet. It is probable that, when the heat of his anger died down, he fostered no such intention. Yet he detained him in prison, and this doubtless in consideration of his guilty partner, who retained her anger against John. This then is the starting point of the narrative. There is a guilty intimacy, carried on in spite of the faithful reproof of the messenger of God, and, under the influence of that intimacy, an acting weakly and wrongly in persecuting the reprover, though unwilling to carry the persecution so far as death. Now we shall see how Satan takes advantage of all this to work through the lusts of the poor victim he ensnares, and thus to carry out his own foul intention.

God. To this end he works through the flesh, ensnaring and leading men to an end which they had no thought of reaching.

It was Herod's birthday, a day which naturally

The flesh ever seeks gratification. Satan ever seeks to frustrate the purpose, and overthrow the testimony of

fastens a man's thoughts upon himself and gives desire for self-gratification. Herod "made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee." It was a royal entertainment of which he himself was the centre. What could the flesh desire more? It was gratified to the full. And now the eyes were also gratified by the exhibition before them of the beauty of

Herodias' daughter, the grace of her movements, the elegance of her dancing; she pleased Herod, and them

that sat with him. What a circle of delight! Then Herod must be equal to the occasion. If all this is for his gratification he must not act meanly, he must-act

as a king. So he swore to her, saying, "Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give it thee, unto the half of my kingdom." Here is the pride of life; the assumption of power to give sovereignly whatever is asked.

For a moment we may pause to consider the precious

contrast to all this in the life and ways of the Lord Jesus. Though Lord of all He took the place of a subject, obedient, dependent man upon earth. Instead of making Himself the centre of earth's ministry He came to minister, finding the scope of that ministry in man's need, and the rule of it in His Father's

will. Satan displayed before Him all the glory of the world only to be indignantly rejected. His poor disciples besought Him, "Master, we would that Thou shouldest I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized: but to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared." (Mark x. 35-40.) He assumes no power to give in the kingdom which He will take obediently to His Father's will, but in grace He will associate those

do for us whatsoever we shall desire. . . . Grant unto us that we may sit, one on Thy right hand, and the other on Thy left hand, in Thy glory." How affecting was His reply after questioning them, "Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that "JOHN BAPTIST'S HEAD IN A CHARGER."

128

whom He loves with Himself in His path of suffering and rejection.

Let us now note the character of the one who had

pleased Herod to the extent of gaining such a promise confirmed by an oath. It is fair to assume that such pleasure was produced by her beauty, and the gracefulness of her movements. Who could have thought that behind all this was a heart taking positive delight in corruption and violence! Oh, world! world! here is the character of those who seduce thee by their charms!

The immoral mother, with a heart thirsting for

revenge upon God's servant, was the instigator, but evidently the daughter entered eagerly into the plan.

Matthew informs us that all was designed beforehand, and that the daughter was instructed of her mother. Yet it would appear that she again referred it to Herodias (see Mark's account) on receiving the king's promise, and the plan was confirmed. Then with haste she went to the king and said, "I will that thou give me by-and-by in a charger the head of John the Baptist." What but a heart perfectly accustomed to wickedness could have led her with haste to express before the king and his assembled guests the desire to have in her own hands the severed head of God's honoured servant? In a dish would she have it, as if to make manifest that it was alone the food that would appease their hunger for revenge.

The king was sorry. He had been ensnared and brought to a point which he had not thought to reach. Even yet there was an opportunity to escape, for that which was asked belonged not to him. On the contrary he was placed in authority to do justice and judgment,

by imprisoning John, and retaining him in prison, and the issue was decided by his pride. Before all his noble guests he had sworn to give, and rather than forfeit his assumed place of sovereign power he would give that which belonged to God.

had already committed himself to a course of injustice

Such then is the exposure of the world and its principles in one of its chiefs. It is the place where man makes himself an object and a centre, seeking his pleasure, gratifying his lust, and exalting himself in pride; the place where seductions abound which have natural beauty and gracefulness, but are inwardly full of corruption and violence, deceit and blood; the place where Satan acts by these means to carry out his vile

purpose to obliterate so far as he can every trace of

divine testimony.

From it all the Lord retires into a desert place, and this shows the character of the path of those who follow Him. Our separation from the world has been rendered more definite by the crucifixion of the Son of God, and the coming to us of the Holy Spirit in testimony for Christ against the world. We have nothing

in common with it; our place is morally outside it all.

Are we then losers? Nay, but infinite gainers. We are placed in company with our blessed Lord from whom we have both food and power. The two following incidents in Matthew xiv. show this in principle. The Lord feeds the poor with bread. Peter is sustained in divine power outside all that is human. And how perfect a contrast is this to the world! There, as we have seen, is lust and its miserable gratification. Here, in

company with Christ, is divine satisfaction; as He said,

130 "BEHOLD, UPON THE FACE OF THE WILDERNESS."

"He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." (John vi. 35.) He

brings to us in His own Person as the Bread of Life the full and complete expression of all that God is in love and grace, and as we feed on Him we are not only supported in our circumstances, but we are also brought into the circle of divine joy and eternal delight.

Again, the world assumes power which belongs not to it, and in wielding it is unconsciously under the awful power of Satan, contravening the ways and testimony of God. As our souls are placed in company with the Son of the living God, we are in divine power against all the power of the enemy, and are thus in

testimony for God and His precious truth. Never was the world more seductive than at the present time, and never greater the manifestation of its hatred of the truth and its adherents. May our spirits be guarded from its withering atmosphere by being kept in His company, where are both food and power, satisfaction and rest! J. R.

"BEHOLD, UPON THE FACE OF THE WILDERNESS!"

Exodus xvi. 14, 21,

THE wilderness to us is the world—the place in which Christians are to-day. You cannot get away from this fact, although in spirit we are seated "in heavenly places in Christ."

And because we are in it there is something there for us-God's own provision for each of His saints in the midst of the barrenness which surrounds us.

"BEHOLD, UPON THE FACE OF THE WILDERNESS," 131

Think of the tender love which has thus thought of us! "Behold, upon the face of the wilderness.. a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground."

It is JESUS in His humiliation—the Holy One who once as the Man of sorrows, passed through this desert

land. It is He whom the Holy Ghost thus commends to each of us, and to whom He draws attention in that little introductory word "BEHOLD." Yes, believer, "BEHOLD" upon the face of the wilderness at this very moment, spite of all the dearth and the roughness of thy path-behold for thee God's own provision. Stoop, gather it up, and sweet shall it be to thy taste, and strength too shall it supply to thee for all thy desert way! Yes, weak as thou art, beset with sorrow as thou art, or, alas! proud as thou art, it is there awaiting thee, and even whilst thou art reading these lines, "Behold" -"upon the face of the wilderness"-on the top of all the desert difficulties-not covered up, but exposed to view-"a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground." It is for every saint of God. Reader, what will you do with it? Will you neglect it? Ah, remember that the desert is no place that you can tread without it! What did the Israelites do? "And they gathered it every morning, every man

> "God, thine everlasting portion, Feeds thee with the mighty's meat, Price of Egypt's hard extortion, Egypt's food no more to eat."

according to his eating: and when the sun waxed hot, it melted." May the Lord Himself lead us all to imitate the right actions of His saints. H. C. A.

"WHOM SAY YE THAT I AM?"

Son of the living God,
In whom, by whom, we live;
Whom to redeem a ruined world,
The Father's love could give.
Thou art revealed the Rock,
Whereon Thy Church is built,
Great Shepherd of the blood-bought flock,
Led homeward as Thou wilt.

All power to Thee belongs,
In heaven and on earth,
And Thou couldst bear unnumbered wrongs
In silence from Thy birth.
Thou who in weakness here
Didst condescend to be,
In garb of toil who didst appear—
Thou Christ! we worship Thee.

Oh, 't is our joy to trace
The glory of that sight,
That overcame, supreme in grace,
The chaos of our night!
The glory that transforms
The darkness into day,
And vessels for thy pleasure forms
From Egypt's worthless clay.

Created, Lord, by Thee,
Are all things, and Thine own,
Thee first, eternally, we see;
Thou rulest from the throne.
Thou breathest—Thou, the Head—
The body acts for Thee;
Thou art the Quickener of the dead,
The Judge Thou too wilt be.

The sure Foundation Thou,
The once-rejected stone;
The Chief Stone; yea, the centre now,
Exalted o'er Thine own.
The Counsellor Thou art,
By whom dissensions cease;
Exponent of the Father's heart;

Life's Author: Prince of peace.

Thou art the Prophet, heard
Through Israel's darkest night;
Almighty Thou, in deed and word,
Effulgent as the light.
Sent of the Father, Thou,
Who camest forth to save,
Found man Thy claims could disallow,
And hew for Thee a grave.

The Resurrection art;
Thy welling tears for death make known
Depths in a Saviour's heart.
The Way, the Truth, the Life,
The First-born from the dead,
God's Isaac—Thou beneath the knife
Unbound, couldst bow the head.

Lord Jesus, Thou alone

Our Passover art Thou,
By Israel blindly slain.
Without their Hope they wander now
Till Thou return again.
Thou art gone up on high
For us to intercede.
Melchisedek, not born to die,
For Israel Thou dost plead.

Thou art our Great High Priest, The sinner's constant Friend.

Thy royal grace to meet the least,
The lowest, loves to bend.
How blest, how rich are they,
Thee, Jesus Christ, who know;

'Tis in Thy praise, day after day Their tiny cups o'erflow.

Devoted to Thy God
Thou in this world hast been.
Yea Thou, His Wisdom, and His Word,
Set up of old were seen.
For Thine it was in time
His counsels to declare;
Thine to atone for Adam's crime,
And Israel's sorrows hear

Thou, in the dust of death,
Didst agonize alone;
Victorious, didst yield Thy breath
In peace none else had known.
Thou art the only Lord,
The God-provided Lamb.
Thou art the self-existent Word,
The wonderful I Am.

Thy glories all transcend
What words have e'er expressed.
Thou the Beginning, Thou the End,
In whom our God doth rest.
The Life Eternal, Thou
Wilt soon shine forth again.
At God's right hand we see Thee now,
Adore Thee—the Amen!

HINDRANCES TO A CHRISTIAN LIFE.

SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY. It is well for us to know, on the authority of God, that

science is an active opposer of the truth. So also is philosophy. Timothy is told to avoid the "oppositions of science falsely so called: which some professing have erred concerning the faith." The Colossians too are exhorted thus: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit."

It is a great lift to the soul (in the way of freeing it from what appeals to us on every hand) when we accept this word of God for ourselves. No doubt there were attractions, and a young man like Timothy would be more attracted by the reasonings of science than some who were older. It is so to-day. Yet that which is most refined and most attractive in man is exposed here as utterly destructive to the truth of God in souls. No one, I take it, could afford to tamper then with either without suffering, or I do not understand what is thus written for us. The reason is not far to seek. Science is man's knowledge, and is built up, not on faith, but on reason. Philosophy is man's wisdom, independent of and without God. May the saints, and especially the young brethren of our day, be preserved from both. True knowledge comes alone from God, and true wisdom also H. C. A.

SCRIPTURE NOTES.

I.

PSALM Xvi. 10.

THERE is no possible connection between this scripture and 1 Peter iii. 19. They refer to entirely different subjects. In Psalm xvi. we have the Lord's experience as the dependent Man, while passing through this world, and also in the prospect of death. He is thus seen in it more in the character of the "Leader and Completer," the perfect Exemplar, of faith. Verse 8 closes, so to speak, His earthly pathway; and it is, as in the contemplation of death and the grave, that He says, in verses 9 and 10, "Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. For Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption." The word rendered "hell" in verse 10 is misleading. It is more exactly hades, as may be seen from Peter's citation of the passage on the day of Pentecost. (See the Greek of Acts ii. 27-31.) Now, hades is a general term to indicate the place of departed spirits, and it is thus used of such in the case of unbelievers as well as of believers. (See Luke xvi. 23.) But then it must be remembered that, while the term covers equally the

spirits of just men made perfect" is entirely different from that where the spirits of the unsaved are kept. This is shown from the words addressed by the Lord to the malefactor, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise;" whereas it is said of the rich man, "And in 'hades' he lift up his eyes, being in torments." The former therefore are in a state of blessedness with Christ; the latter are in a condition of unspeakable woe, shut out for ever from the presence of the Lord. There is consequently no foundation whatever for the popular idea that our blessed Lord descended, after His death, and before His resurrection, into hell; nor, it may be added, for a prevalent opinion that the passage in Peter means that He went there to preach

abode of good and bad spirits, the place of "the

the flood in the days of Noah. From 1 Peter i. 11 we learn that it was the Spirit of Christ that acted in, and

testified through, the prophets of old. It was thus the Spirit of Christ that testified through Noah. This makes all plain when we read that Christ, having been put to death in the flesh, was quickened by the Spirit, by which also (note the word "also" as introducing an additional thing) "He went and preached unto the spirits in prison." But when? The answer is found in what follows, from which we gather that it was in the days of God's longsuffering before the flood. The Spirit of Christ thus preached through Noah to those spirits who are now in prison in consequence of their disobedience to, and rejection of, Noah's testimony. 11. ROMANS vi. 13. As pointed out in a note to this verse in the New Translation, there is a difference in the two words rendered "yield." The first is in the present, and the

second is in the past (aorist) tense; that is, when the apostle says, as here translated, "Yield yourselves unto God," the meaning is, Let it have been done, done as an accomplished act; but when he says, "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin," it is that this is never to be done, because believers, "as those that are alive from the dead," have been "made free from sin," and have "become servants to God," (v. 22.) They belong therefore to Him, and thus His claims having been acknowledged, they are to hold themselves (their members) daily and hourly at

His disposal as instruments of righteousness unto God.

All this follows from the truth contained in the first

part of the chapter. The way of deliverance from the power of sin is there given. We are seen to be dead to sin in the death of Christ, unto which we were baptized. "Our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed [annulled], that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin." Then, inasmuch as in that Christ died, He died unto sin once, and in that He liveth, He liveth unto God, we are to reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus.

It is thus in the reckoning of faith that we are both dead to sin (in the death of Christ), and alive to God in Him as risen out of death. Death to sin, and being alive to God are therefore as it is often put a faith

dead to sin (in the death of Christ), and alive to God in Him as risen out of death. Death to sin, and being alive to God, are therefore, as it is often put, a faith state; that is, it is not our actual condition, but one that is true to faith. If then we were to yield our members to sin, it would be to deny our deliverance from it through death with Christ; and if we are not yielded up to God, it would show that we had never entered into the truth of being alive to Him in Christ Jesus. To learn these blessed truths is an absolute necessity for the apprehension of redemption, and for a life of victory over sin, and of liberty in the service of God. But for this we must experimentally pass through the processes of chapter vii.; for until we have discovered what we are, we can never be in the truth of grace, or in that of our perfect standing in Christ.

TTE

Jони xv. 11.

It is generally accepted that we should read "be" instead of "remain" in this scripture, and a very

communications was that they might share in it, and this is really what He says. It is asked what this—His—joy is to which He alludes. It is the joy, as seen from the latter part of verse 10, which He experienced through keeping His Father's commandments and abiding in His love; in other words, it was His full enjoyment of the Father's love which He found in keeping His commandments. And He tells His

slight consideration will show that the change yields the better sense. "Remain" implies that the Lord's joy was already possessed by the disciples, whereas "be" means that the Lord's object in these

enjoyment of the Father's love which He found in keeping His commandments. And He tells His disciples that if they keep His commandments they will abide in His love, for then there will be no hindrance to its manifestation to, and in, them (compare chapter xiv. 21), and that thus they will be sharers in His own joy, and their joy—their joy in the blessed experience of His love, and of communion with Him in His joy—will be full. Ah, what possibilities are thus opened out to the obedient heart! May we all seek to enter experimentally into this ineffable enjoyment!

2 CORINTHIANS V. 21.

It is essential for the understanding of this scripture to see that the apostle is dealing with our past state and condition and not with our guilt. This is proved by his words, "If One died for all, then were all dead." The death of Christ for all shows that all were in a state of spiritual death. So in the gospel of John, where the Lord speaks of the believer having passed "out of death into life." (Chap. v. 24.) As to the expression made sin, the basis laid in righteousness

for the outgoing of the ministry of reconciliation, we cannot do better than borrow the language of another. He says, "This does not refer simply to bearing our sins. . . . The condition in which we were, as a whole race, was that of fallen, sinful Adam. Christ the sinless One came and stood for us and God's glory substitutively; that is, as a sacrifice in that place, He was made sin, underwent the forsaking of God, and, glorifying God, died in and to the place, to the whole condition of being, in which we were, and in which, as made sin, He stood for us before God. This work, though done as and for man, I doubt not, goes farther than our salvation. He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. He takes away, as God's Lamb, the sin of the world. His sacrifice is the basis of the condition of that new heavens and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." This last sentence will help us, moreover, to perceive that our becoming the righteousness of God in Christ, as the answer to, and the fruition of, His being made sin on the cross, must include future display in the same glory with Christ. Undoubtedly as in Him (see verse 17) we are now God's righteousness, but nothing short of our being in the same condition and glory as our blessed Lord would be the adequate response, on God's part, to His work, or express the meaning of the language here used. For if God's righteousness has been displayed in His glorifying Christ in Himself (John xiii. 32), it will also be declared in bringing all His people, those for whom Christ stood in death, into the same state and condition in Him.

RESURRECTION.

READINGS AT CROYDON. No. 1.

JOHN XX. 1-20.

THE subject before us is the resurrection, and I think it would be a help to open out the subject, if we divided it into sections. (1) What the resurrection is to God; (2) what the resurrection is to the Lord Jesus Himself; (3) what it is from God to man, to the sinner; (4) what it is for the sinner turned to God; (5) what it is to the power of evil; (6) what it is to all things. We will take them in order, but our subject is, the resurrection,

The first is, what the resurrection is to God. It is very interesting for us to understand what it is to God, because it has changed everything. Perhaps there is no subject that we are more practically unacquainted with than the consequences of the resurrection. Nothing can be simpler when you come to look at it. Up to the resurrection God was dealing with man as he was; it was from man to God. Now, from the resurrection, God has got a Man to His own satisfaction. That Man is raised from the dead by the glory of the Father; and now God is acting downward from Him to man.

You said, I think, that before the resurrection God was acting with man according to what man was.

Yes, but now He has a Man to His pleasure. He

was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. God is working downward now, from that Man. He is not working from man upward.

Do I understand that Christ in resurrection is the beginning of the creation of God?

Exactly. It is the first day of the week. In the Old Testament the seventh day was the day of rest; now it is the first day. The first great thing (and it will have a great effect upon every soul that really understands it) is, what the resurrection is to God.

Would you just develop it a little?

Instead of dealing with man, or having him under trial, He has a Man to His entire satisfaction at His right hand, so that He can work from that Man down.

Would you connect that with the cross?

Of course. You see the first man was under the judgment of God. God had him under trial. Then comes the Lord Jesus Christ, born of a woman. He takes man's place, He bore the judgment that was upon man; but not only that, He glorified God in doing it.

Would John xiii. 31, 32, come in there?

Exactly. "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him." As another has said, God was indebted to a Man for glory. But that Man was His own Son! Still, it was a Man, because none but a man could suffer for men. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same."

Does not that help us to understand what the resurrection is to God?

It does. As we read, "I have both glorified, and will

way. So that, from God's side, we understand that the resurrection is a new start altogether? Quite so. In Matthew xxvii., the moment Christ

glorify again." He was glorified in raising Lazarus, but He was glorified again in being raised Himself. That is the first consequence of the resurrection, and what all our blessings date from. What a wonderful alteration it makes. Infidelity springs from trying to work from man up to God. Evolution works that

died the vail was rent. God got the answer to the golden box-the ark. He rent the vail because He had got a Man on the earth who answered to the golden box. He had got the antitype to the ark. People talk

of going into the Holiest as if they were going to a place. They are going into the presence of Christ,

because He is the antitype to the golden box. God has got all He wanted.

Can we say that God will have all He wants because the first-fruits are before Him?

He has got it.

But He will have more when the end comes.

How?

"Afterward they that are Christ's at His coming." Oh! I see, that is the body raised. Nothing is

complete till Christ comes back.

Can we say all is made sure because Christ is there?

No doubt of it. The thief goes into Paradise because Christ is there, though he had lost his body. You see resurrection alters everything. If I look at current

thoughts, resurrection is frequently called a receipt. Quite true; but that is not all, and there is nothing that so hinders truth as a limitation of truth. God has got a Man to His own pleasure at His right hand. The other is part of the truth; but the danger is, you put a part for the whole, and do great damage.

God has satisfied His love as well as His righteousness.

Quite so. The parable of the prodigal son illustrates it. The elder brother says to his father, in terms, "Your conduct is most incongruous. I never transgressed your commandment, and yet you never even gave me a kid; you never showed me such consideration, yet here is a scapegrace who has been a scandal to your house, and you kill for him the fatted calf." Now you solve that incongruity.

What you have stated before is the secret. God has found a Man that suits Him.

Exactly. It is on the ground of that Man that He receives him. He is accepted in the Beloved. It was the Shepherd that brought him back, and it was on the ground of the Man who brought him back that the Father receives him. He is bringing many sons to glory. If Adam had never done anything wrong, he never could be in the same position as one brought to God by Christ.

The second section is what the resurrection is to Christ. The first great thing is that He has opened a way for God's heart to reach man. Therefore He says, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." He had come to remove everything, so that God's heart could come forth in all its mighty volume, and meet the returning sinner here on earth. So that the prodigal finds he is received with love. Goodness brought him, and love meets him. But that is not all. He has also found a

into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." He has opened a way for God's heart to flow out, and He has found a company for Himself.

RESURRECTION.

The rent vail would signify the first, and here (John xx.) we get the second, "My Father and your Father."

Yes, and you get it in Hebrews. "Both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one." People try to make Adam love Christ. No such thing. What is Christianity? It is that we belong to another

race altogether.

Thomas à Kempis proceeds on those lines.

Yes. Thomas à Kempis and all those did. What was the only thing the steward was sworn to in seeking a wife for Isaac?

She must be of his kindred.

That is the difficulty with souls. They have not got

hold of the fact that they are Christ's kindred. How can you be His companions if you are not of His kindred?

Would John xii. 24 illustrate it?

Exactly.

Does not that difficulty spring from souls not seeing the new kind of man?

Altogether.

Would you say a little, please, as to the new kind of man? As the Christian is now, as the fruit of Christ, so to speak.

Well, that properly will be our subject to-morrow evening-Christ formed in you. The great thing is now, that the resurrection has opened the way for it. If He had not died, He would have been alone; but if He die, He brings forth many grains of His own order. Christ lives in you. Most people think they get eternal life. Quite true; but they do not know that Christ personally lives in them. What has happened to the old "I"? Crucified. "I am crucified with Christ." Well, if that man is gone, what sort of person are you now? "Christ liveth in me." That is, Christ formed in you.

You spoke of trying to make Adam love Christ. Is it impossible?

Don't draw me out on that subject. I might shock you. The finest quality in your nature dislikes Christ. Do you understand that now? Do you like it? The most amiable trait in your character doesn't like Christ. Christ and Adam can't go together. I know Romans vii., but Galatians iv. is far deeper experience to me than Romans vii. Christ has got brethren of His own order. The first was a natural man; of the earth, earthy; the second Man is out of heaven.

I think we might go on to the third section now.

Before we proceed, might I ask if, when we speak of this new company, we can apply the words "out of heaven"?

That is what it is. I am not saying how far your heavenly origin comes out, because that is as you grow. Therefore the great effect of ministry is "till we all come . . . unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Some people get out of it very easily by saying it is future.

Is it not rather the object of the ministry?

Yes.

Here on earth?

No man can say he has finished his work.

Quite so; but it is not a question as to whether you have reached it.

Certainly not. If you had reached it you might go home.

Now, the third section is how God is to the returning sinner because of resurrection. You see it well described in Saul's conversion. The light shines from God. God begins the work. Many think man begins and God goes on. A light out of heaven met Saul of Tarsus. God has a Man at His own right hand, and He works from that Man. God begins from the finish. We think He ought to begin at the beginning, but He begins at the finish. The light comes first. It comes

down from a glorified Christ. Is that conveyed by the preaching of the word now?

I believe it is the great power of the evangelist—the light to open their eyes. Look at the woman who searched for the silver piece. She sweeps diligently; but if she had not had a very bright light she would not have found it.

Is it light as to His love?

God's nature is light. Fear is always the first result of the light. Fear is the beginning of wisdom, You see it in the thief on the cross. He says, "We receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss." You see grace there. Light shows us the good as well as the bad.

Is conscience the only doorway for the light? God works on it.

I suppose we learn the love in the light.

Yes. Look at the woman of Samaria. She doesn't

say a word about the love. She says, "He told me all that ever I did." He is a purchaser with notice. Do you understand that? You purchase an article knowing that there is a flaw in it. He knows all about you.

Does God always act as light before He reveals Himself as love?

He must do so. It is His nature. Look at Saul. When the light shone on him he fell to the ground, because the light exposed him. He had thought he was a perfect man.

Is the conscience always reached first?

I think it is.

You are speaking of an unconverted person?

Not only. The great thing with the most advanced

Not only. The great thing with the most advanced Christian is, he is distressed that he is not according to the light.

But is not the saint drawn through the heart?

Well, he gets drawn to the Lord, but his senses are exercised. It is remarkable that the word there is a very strong one—it means gymnastics.

ery strong one—it means gymnastics.

What would you call the drawing of the Father?

It is His work to do it. And John uses heart for conscience. "If our heart condemn us." Peter's conscience (John xxi.) was clear, but his heart was not. There is the affection connected with the conscience.

But, with the woman, she had conscience.

Christ begins with the way He could set her up in Samaria? When she did not take in the spiritual meaning of His word, He touched her conscience. She could not have got it without. She thought it was spring-water. It is the same word in the original. What a wonderful thing, that God can come out and

take the prodigal in His arms. He can say. It is because I am glorified by a Man, and I work from that Man downwards. What Christians find out after perhaps 20 years God begins with. It may be a very long day before you find it out; still, God begins there.

I suppose really we learn the truth in the reverse order to which God works.

We have to learn it from our own side. I think that, as a rule, you are thinking of how the sinner feels instead of how God feels. But the prodigal says, It is my father I have offended, and I want to see how he stands with me. I count upon his goodness. And he comes, having made up a speech (make me as one of thy hired servants), but he finds his father is full of affection, and he doesn't venture to propose it. Not a word of it. I once said to a brother, Do you know how God feels about you? I never was asked that question

in my life, he said.

So that the true gospel is, that God works down to the sinner?

Yes. In the Old Testament you brought an offering

to Him; and as you had faith, your offering was accepted. But there was no resurrection. Now God has removed the man that offended Him, and however you may try to bring him back into favour you never will. That is what people are trying to do. The prodigal felt that he was not fit; but we are looking at the resurrection—how God can take the prodigal in His arms, and let out all His love, because He works from the Man who has glorified Him, and, therefore, "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." It is not only that He has forgiven all

your offences, but He has transferred you to new ground. You are changed from Adam to Christ, and now "they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." And, therefore, the chapter winds up with, "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

Can we find all the prodigal's blessings in Romans?

I think so. I think he has got as far as the fifth.

He is accepted, but he doesn't enjoy it.

Is not he in the Father's house?

It is the joys of the Father's house—the Holy Ghost. The great supper is the present enjoyment, when "out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."

Could you put it in other words, so as to let us all be clear? You say at the end of Romans v. you have a man changed from Adam to Christ.

Yes; the first eleven verses are the terms upon which God can be with you.

Now we turn to what the resurrection is to the believer himself. I can explain it better by the type than anything else. In Exodus xii. Christ is the perfect sacrifice. I may say, every Christian upon the face of the earth knows that. But what is the state of that Christian? He is occupied with Pharaoh, that is Satan; and the Egyptians, that is the flesh. He is not out of Egypt. Next he learns another thing. Not only was Christ "delivered for our offences," but He "was raised again for our justification." Now that

is what the Red Sea is. Moses has to make a way

through the Red Sea, and they are to walk it. I believe in walking it that you appropriate the death of Christ, and then you are out of it.

Then deliverance will be connected with that?

Deliverance must come after. I am speaking of how you stand with God. You are through the Red Sea, what Paul learnt in those three days when he appropriated the death of Christ, as the only way out of himself. You are then free with God.

I refer to the type. You are out of Egypt and clear of Pharaoh and the Egyptians. That is the Red Sea. But I don't believe a person is there unless he has gone through it experimentally. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you."

You make walking then appropriation?

Yes. I use the type to make it plain. You are passed "out of death into life," not "from death." It is a great help to see that if I am out of it I must have been in it. Every man on the face of the earth is in death. John v. 24 is "passed out of death into life."

John vi. is not the Lord's supper then?

Oh! no. That is where Romanism comes in.

A Christian in the present day may say, "I am very happy; all my sins are gone." The next day he is very depressed. He doesn't know resurrection as it is with God.

Do you mean that the resurrection is the demonstration of the putting away of sins?

It is the putting away of all that is not of God. There must be death or there could not be resurrection. If you accept resurrection you must accept death. The

comfort of the saint is that he knows that the old man is gone from the eye of God to His infinite glory. It is gone from Him whom I have offended. I knew it was gone from the eye of God for years before I saw it was gone from myself—because I was trying to improve myself. The first great thing is to understand acceptance. There are two great steps; first acceptance, then liberty. Acceptance is that God can accept me without a cloud.

Then liberty can only follow upon the experimental acceptance of resurrection?

Quite so, and if the acceptance is not full, the liberty will never be so.

I think we might go on now to the next section. The power of evil is destroyed. He entered into death that "He might destroy him that had the power of death." The more you study it, the more you see how it affects everything you have to do with.

Would you explain in what way He destroyed him that had the power of death?

He let him expend all his power, and came out of it. He annulled it.

Set aside his claims?

Yes, abolished death. Pharaoh is gone. That character of power is over.

What power did Satan exercise over man?

You get the thought all along the line with Israel—Pharaoh, Amalek, Balaam, and the seven nations. Pharaoh is over for the Christian. He begins with resurrection. "Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." I do not say you are free of the others, but I say you are free of Pharaoh.

What are the seven nations?
When you come into it you will find out. The sixth

of Ephesians—the combined forces of Satan. I think very few know what the sixth of Ephesians is. You must be on the ground before you can find out. You must be over Jordan before you can fight the seven nations. What is the good of armour to a man if he

is not in battle? It is the man who is in battle who knows the good of it.

We cannot say that Satan is destroyed, can we?

His power of death is gone. It is taken out of his

hands. A man has come out of it. . . . Israel suffered eventually from the nations. I don't believe Satan is cast out of heaven till the Church goes up. If you want to have an easy path here, don't touch heavenly things. There is nothing that Satan hates more than a heavenly man. He will do all he can to oppose you, and he knows what will oppose you. He has only two barrels to his gun. The first is, he will allure you; and if that does not do, he will crush you—if he can. Look at the children of the captivity. The enemy says, "If you won't eat the king's meat I will put you into the fire." Well, the same God that delivered from the one will deliver from the other. Nothing shows the terrible nature of Satan like his trying to tempt the Lord. First he tried to allure Him, and then he attempted

I suppose every man who takes that ground has to meet Satan?

to crush Him. In Gethsemane he brings death before

Him.

No doubt of it. If he found you were making advance, he would use it. But you would find you have the power of the Lord with you. As an engineer

would say if you ask him, "Can you execute that work?" "Yes, if I have means." Ah! that will do.

You mean the more a man takes that ground, the more he has God with him.

He cannot take it unless he belongs to the heavenly Man. Some try to be heavenly men by themselves. By union with Him I am a heavenly man, but not otherwise . . . I am united to a Man in the glory.

Then in union I am on resurrection ground.

You are united to the Man in heaven. You never know union till you are brought to where the person is. Rebekah has to go all the way to Isaac. She has to encounter two things; first, family influence; and then she has to go through the wilderness, and every step she takes is a step further away from her family.

Does she give up her family?

She gives up its influence. She has a higher influence.

Quite so. The more right a thing is the more dangerous it is.

What does Balaam mean?

Balaam is the worst influence that you can possibly be subjected to. The lowest society you keep is that which colours you. Many a person I have no doubt gets into low society, and he is leavened and damaged before he knows where he is. The Corinthians suffered from Balaam, the Thessalonians from Amalek. Woe betide you when you get into Balaam's company. He invited them out. You get into society, you get under its influence. If you read Rev. ii. and iii. you will see it. A man or woman is spoilt by the company he or she keeps. I do not mean in business. There is no notion of company in business. That is not

company. You are then on the qui vive. I mean social company, where you can unbutton your coat; do you understand? In business you keep your eyes open.

Do you mean unconverted people?

No. A Christian on low ground is worse than an unconverted person, he damages you more, because you say, "Oh! he can do so-and-so." But how can you keep company with a worldling if you have really the motives and tastes of Christ-how can you find any pleasure in his society? Duties and business are very different from society. Look at the Corinthians, what they came to; they went into an idol's temple to eat.

Well, the last section is, that in resurrection everything comes out new, and therefore Christ begins. It begins with a new day—the first day of the week. Everything comes out new. He says, "Behold, I make all things new." Our subject for to-morrow is "Christ formed in you." J. B. S.

"LET US KEEP THE FEAST." THE reference made to the passover and to the feast of

unleavened bread in 1 Corinthians v. is very important and instructive. Although these two were instituted together in Exodus xii., and were to be inseparably connected, yet, in their spiritual meaning, and in their application to the people of God now, they are distinguished, inasmuch as they set forth different truths and blessings. These, however, as in the type, should never be separated, though we are often, alas! in danger of doing so, like the Corinthians; and therefore we, too, need the exhortation of the Spirit of God-"Let us keep the feast."

This feast does not in any way refer to the Lord's

Supper, but is an allusion to the feast of unleavened bread, which began with the passover, and was kept up for seven days. It was specially marked by the entire putting away of all leaven. Their bread, their food, was to be entirely free of it; nor was it to be found in any of their houses.

The application of this to believers now is as simple

The application of this to believers now is as simple as it is solemn and important. Leaven represents, as always in Scripture, the energy or activity of evil, whether displaying itself in our outward conduct, or working in the mind and desires, where it always begins, and if not detected and judged, works out in a manifest way, either in bad conduct (as with the Corinthians - compare carefully 2 Cor. xi. 3 with xii. 20, 21), or in the way of doctrines and teachings contrary to, and subversive of, the truth. (See Gal. v. 8-10.) Hence the apostle exhorts the Corinthians to keep the feast, "not with old leaven"—their evil habits and ways before conversion-"neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness." All of this character must be entirely refused and judged in order to keep the feast. Then there is the positive side, the eating of "the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth," for

thus only can it be kept.

Now this feast of seven days' duration refers to the whole of our lives here as a redeemed people. It means for us that from the moment we believe in Christ as our Saviour, and are therefore seen under the eye of God in all the cleansing efficacy of His blood, we are called to walk in practical separation from evil of every kind, whether in mind, ways, or doctrine; for thus only can the heart feed upon, and find present enjoyment in, Christ as the One who suffered for our sins, and thus

removed them from the sight of God for ever, besides revealing God to us as a Saviour-God, whose purpose it was to have a people for Himself, clear of all judgment, and able to have communion with Him.

and able to have communion with Him.

Hence in the type the passover necessarily came first, inasmuch as it typified, as is clearly stated in the passage, the sacrifice of Christ. The passage leads presents

the sacrifice of Christ. The passover lamb presents Him to us as "the Lamb of God" "without blemish and without spot." The sprinkled blood sets forth the efficacy of His precious blood before God, which not only shelters us from the judgment of God, but by which we have been redeemed.

We learn first its value as sheltering us from divine

judgment; but we must not stop here. God's thought was not only to have a sheltered people, but a redeemed people, and the blood of the Lamb secured both; though before they could enjoy the latter they had to be brought out of the enemy's land, and from under his hand altogether.* It is in the consciousness of our sins and our misery that we first learn to receive and appreciate the blessed work of Jesus; for it was to remove all the sins, all the evil connected with us, from His sight, that God gave up His beloved Son to be the sacrifice for sins; and as we truly learn our need of Christ and of

His work, we must necessarily feel in some measure how hateful and evil sin is in God's sight. Now this will

^{*} For this they had to journey through the Red Sea, which represents for us the death and resurrection of Christ. We can only enjoy redemption, or deliverance, as we apprehend and receive in faith that He (Jesus our Lord) was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. This is much more than the sense of being sheltered by His blood. All blessing has been secured for us by His precious sacrifice; but we must learn our need of it, and by faith appropriate it, as led by the Spirit according to the word of God, which reveals the thoughts and will of God to us.

ways, and the practical refusal and putting away of all that is discovered to be evil in His sight, as revealed in the death of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. It is only thus that our hearts are free to enjoy the love of Christ, as expressed in all the atoning sufferings He endured for us, or to enjoy communion with God, who has called us "unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus

Christ our Lord." (1 Cor. i, 9.) The Corinthians were forgetting this. They knew that Christ was their Saviour, that He had died for their sins; but they had got sadly careless as to the feast; that is, as to maintaining in their hearts and ways what was suitable to God, so as to be free to enjoy communion with Him. They were forgetting His holiness, as declared in that judgment of sin borne by Jesus. Hence, instead of spiritual gladness, the apostle had to call them to sadness, to mourning and selfjudgment about their ways and associations. And indeed the Lord's hand was upon them in discipline to produce this very result. "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world." (See chap. xi.) Still His thought and purpose ever is to bring His people into the enjoyment of His own presence and love. This, however, can only be by the maintenance of what is suitable to His holiness, as we read, "Holiness becometh Thine house, O Lord, for ever." At the same time let us remember that it is also written, "In Thy presence is fulness of joy," for holiness and happiness always go together, slow though our hearts are to understand, and lay hold of, this. (Compare 1 John i. 3-6.)

the feast, and what is meant by leaven. We must bear in mind as to the latter, that association with evil is leavening. The leaven had not to be found in all the houses of the Israelites; telling us that all the surroundings and associations of the one who would keep the feast must be maintained according to the truth and will of God. This is a deeply-important principle, both searching and far-reaching in its application. Let us recall the warning of the Spirit of God to these very Corinthians in chapter xv., "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners."

Surely if ever there was a day when the people of

God needed to be aroused to this it is the present time. What mixing of the precious and the vile there is! What contact of holy with unholy! (See Jeremiah xv. 19, and Haggai ii. 12, 13.) Still the exhortation is given to us by the Spirit of God, "Let us keep the feast . . . with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." Sincerity means for us true uprightness of heart. No unworthy motives are to be allowed to work in the mind and heart, no guile nor duplicity practised, no assuming of an outward position or manner, which is not in keeping with the desire and purpose of our hearts. We are to be affected and formed by the truth in all the moral springs from which our actions flow; for the truth has a sanctifying, cleansing action on the heart and thoughts, when we submit ourselves to its operation. Then, practically cleansed by the word and Spirit of God from all that is defiling and unsuitable to the presence of our God, we are free to keep the feast "with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

S. M. A.

"LET YOUR YEA BE YEA; AND YOUR NAY, NAY";

OR, THE DECISION.

INDECISION is one great hindrance in the Christian path. So long as a man does not go into the responsibilities of the question before God, "Am I for this world or for that?" so long will Satan amuse him with something or other here, while the Spirit of God alone will satisfy him if he desires to go on in faith.

No doubt all Christians say, "Christ for my sins," but you cannot say, "I have Christ for the path," apart from the ministry of the Spirit. The Holy Ghost, I do not doubt, has come down not only to conduct the Bride, the Church, across the desert to Christ, but also to satisfy and fill her heart all along that path. This is foreshadowed for us in Genesis xxiv., where we see that the servant comes into Mesopotamia to guide Rebekah through the desert to Isaac. But an important question has to be answered before there can be any start along the path, and it is this that I would consider a little.

Evidently Rebekah might have got a very clear understanding of the grace that had chosen her, and might have spoken of it too, without taking the path which led her on to him whose heart she was called to know, and whose wealth she was called to share. She might have said to any acquaintance, "Have you heard about it? I am the recipient of wonderful tidings from Canaan. Isaac is the heir to all Abraham's wealth, and I am selected to be his bride."

All this she might have said without shewing by her actions in everyday-life that (as much as in her lay) she was making this news her own in practical reality. It cannot, I think, be disputed that a soul might say, "I belong to Christ, and some day I am going to heaven," and yet not be taking daily steps in that direction, as seen in their life here. There would be little proof in some that Christ and heaven are the objects of their daily course, had we not the assurance that it is so from their own lips!

Lips without life will not suit Abraham's servant, nor will it suit the Holy Ghost. He is here with one definite object, and whether that object is accomplished in you and in me or not, He will not tarry here. He will commence his journey at once, for He must return to His master. He is here in grace, in the world as it is, but not to sanction it, and surely not to rest in it. No, neither of these; but He is here to lead out of it.

The crucial question is the one that was asked when,

in solemn conclave, Rebekah was assembled, together with her relatives, in the presence of this Canaan stranger. This is the question then for each of us to face to-day. It cannot be avoided by anyone calling himself a Christian. "Wilt thou go with this man?" Will you begin your journey this day in the company of the Spirit of God? Remember, you must be chosen first, and know it, and then the journey only begins if we have affirmatively answered this question. There are around us many souls who will doubtless spend their future eternity with the Lord, who are not spending their present time in the enjoyment of the company of the Holy Ghost. They are undecided about this

question.

 $162\,$ "let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay."

"Peradventure," says the servant, when on the eve of undertaking his all-important mission, "the woman will not be willing to follow me!" Oh, my reader, is this your case? It is, I doubt not, the case of thousands of people who will be in heaven. I do not say that they are not converted. It is no question of their conversion. No; but they will not "go with" the ministry and leading of the Holy Spirit, and will not allow the home of Mesopotamia with its attractions to give place to the desert sands and those untrodden paths, known only to the Canaan stranger, the Spirit of God! To be under the guidance of the Spirit, and no other, is manifestly to have begun

Oh, my reader, has this solemn meeting of which I

the journey.

of God!

speak ever been held in the history of your soul? You are a Christian, and you know well where and what the terminus of that is. But it is not of the terminus that we speak in this meeting. What is the thesis—the question? It is of the company or path that leads to the Terminus. Better this meeting should be held at once. Let us weigh all that can be said. Call in your business, your friends, your prospects, your pleasures—all that you have ever counted on and lived for in this world. Let us hear what each has to plead, in order that you should not undertake this journey. Then let us hear what the heavenly Stranger has to say to us about Him whose Messenger He is, so that this question being fairly argued out, your soul

may go forth from this moment, and from this solemn meeting, unshackled and unimpeded, to commence its heavenward journey in the company of the Spirit Now, note you, that His business is urgent. You cannot afford to say, "Well, I will think about this matter; I require a little time for consideration." You surely want rest here on earth—rest of soul, and this question decided, in the company and by means of the ministry of the Spirit, you shall get it. Do not be content to say, "There is rest only in heaven." Christ spoke of our finding rest on earth. He says, "Take my yoke upon you, . . . and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Many a one finds true rest in heaven, who nevertheless had no rest on earth, because of not going "with this Man."

"I will go." This is the only right answer from the chosen Bride. Remember the Lord says, "Ye have not

chosen Me, but I have chosen you." We are chosen by Him. Have we one and all responded (the matter being fairly argued out), "I will go"? We are all poor failing beings; but in all honesty of purpose are we going "with this Man"? Our hearts only set upon this? And if we are, then all along our course in this world we shall find for our comfort that this reply will come up again and again. Amidst the responsibilities of the household, as well as in the church, the house of God, "I will go" will meet every difficulty which arises. I have His company through the waste, and He has only one Object to speak to me of—the One to whom I belong, and for whom He will of necessity care for me, all along the desert path. I am to share and know all that is the portion of the only Son.

What are all your surroundings WORTH, my reader, that there should be with you, or indeed with any of us, one moment's hesitation about going "with this man"? We hear the question, "Wilt thou go?" I

164 "LET YOUR YEA BE YEA; AND YOUR NAY, NAY."

confess to you that my own surroundings appear to me (and may God keep it ever fresh in me) so very small. so very poor, so very contemptible, yea, to be accounted only as so much dung and dross, that I wonder that I could ever have a moment's happiness outside the ministry of the Spirit. It is good to weigh the value of things in the light that God casts upon them. Are you distressed in spirit, cast about, as it were, by the tumultuous sea of this world? Ah! why is it? Have you honestly faced the question which I have here feebly tried to put before you? and have you answered it? To be really happy you must be consciously in the company of Him of whom Abraham's servant was only a type, and it is only therein that you will be happy. He who wants heaven and earth enjoys neither the one nor the other.

"I will go." May this language be truly the utterance of all our hearts. We shall not then require to tell people that we are going to heaven. They will see it. As these desert days come and go one after the other, there will always be a full supply for each, and no looking back. Farther each day from Mesopotamia. But you must make a beginning. It is not conversion, as I have said. Do not be content to think that if you are converted you have said "I will go." It is a great mistake. But if you have said it once, you will by grace be continually saying it. I go forth to-day, a day that I have never lived in this desert before, a day of whose intricacies I have no knowledge at all; but by grace "I will go" with this man, and He will suffice me. (See John iv. 14; vii. 38.) The Spirit is leading

the Bride through the desert to Christ. Will He allow

her to famish?

We are privileged to weigh the things of time against those of eternity, and this is done always when we "go with" this Man. It is then, How does this look in the light of God? (2 Cor. iv. 17, 18; v. 5.) May the response of the ways, as well as those of the lips, be seen in us, seen and read of all men. "Wilt thou go with this Man?... I WILL GO." Amen.

H. C. A.

DIVINE LOVE.

"Thou winnowest my way, Thou wilt not let me be; Each step Thou watchest day by day; For why? Thou lovest me. Love must its object bless; Love cannot brook a flaw: It knows to stoop with fond caress, Yet keeps the rod in awe. Love hath its 'eyes of fire' To bring me to Thy feet. To purge and search, it doth not tire To make its object meet. Love hath its hand of might To lay and keep me low; It hath its touch of fond delight, That bids all weakness go. Love hath its 'two-edged sword' That pierceth through and through; Love whispers low, 'Fear not thy Lord, I live-I died for you.' Love hath its 'eves like doves,' That touch the inmost heart, And sweetly to its object proves 'Thou hast the loved one's part.'"

SCRIPTURE NOTES.

۲.

MATTHEW ii, 23.

It should be noticed, in examining the scripture, that it does not say that there was any distinct and definite prophecy that our blessed Lord should be called a Nazarene. It speaks, we apprehend, in a general way, for the language is, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets," which signifies, as we understand it, that this is the sense of the prophetic testimony, not of one prophet simply, but of the prophets generally. The second difficulty is as to what is meant by the words, "He shall be called a Nazarene." Some attempt to solve it by the endeavour to deduce the word "Nazarene" from the Hebrew word "Netzer" -a hranch-and thus to connect it with Isaiah xi. 1, where this word is found. But it is not used in this sense by other prophets, and consequently would seem to be excluded from our scripture. Moreover, our Lord's being called a Nazarene is so plainly connected with His dwelling in Nazareth that one hesitates to accept such a solution, even if it could be satisfactorily shown that "Nazareth" is derived from the word employed by Isaiah for "Branch." It should also be added, that Nazarene is a regular word to denote an inhabitant of the city. (Mark uses a different form of the word.) But if a moral meaning is sought for, it might be discovered in Nathanael's words, "Can there

any good thing come out of Nazareth?" In that case it will mean that, according to the testimony of the prophets, Christ should be despised and rejected of men. This is all that we can say, and this only as suggestion.

II.

ROMANS v. 18.

A very little consideration will show that the translation of this scripture in our version cannot be accepted. Taking the latter clause as it stands, it would imply the salvation of all men, which manifestly is not the teaching of Scripture. The error of the rendering lies in the preposition "upon," which is given as the equivalent of the Greek work eig. There is no justification whatever for such a rendering, for the word means "into," "unto," "towards," etc., according to its connection; and there can be no doubt from its usage that "towards" would most nearly express in this place the sense of the original, that is, the mind of the Spirit. Thus read, the meaning is entirely changed. It will then run (we quote from the New Translation), "So then as [it was] by one offence towards all men to condemnation, so by one righteousness towards all men for justification of life."* Now then for the interpretation. First of all, it will be observed that the contrast is drawn between Adam's sin, "the offence of one," and "the accomplished subsisting righteousness" of Christ, together with the effect, or rather bearing, of each. The "offence" of Adam stretched out in its bearing towards all men

• Compare the rendering in the Revised Version, which has substituted "unto" for "upon."

for condemnation, inasmuch as all men came under the consequences of his fall. The righteousness of One (Christ), on the other hand, extended towards all men, in that the gospel which proclaimed it was to be preached to every creature under heaven. (Col. i. 23.) Whether souls came under its benefit and blessing depended upon another thing; viz., whether the glad tidings were received. We thus read, in chap. iii., that "the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ (is) unto $(\epsilon i s)$ all and upon $(\epsilon \pi i)$ all them that believe." While therefore the righteousness of One is "towards" all, it is only those that believe who receive justification of life, that justification which believers possess in virtue of having life in Him who is risen from the dead, a life which is out of and beyond death, and hence a life to which no condemnation could ever attach. (Chap. viii, 1-3.) The application of the truth contained in v. 18 follows in the next verse; and it will be noticed that instead of "all men," where the bearing or scope of the respective actions is spoken of, we have now "many," when it is a question of application. This is to teach that the consequencescondemnation, and justification of life, being constituted sinners or righteous-are limited to those, on the one hand, connected with Adam, and, on the other hand, to those connected with Christ. Through birth into this world we are linked with Adam, and through faith we are associated with Christ, and then no longer under the penal consequences of Adam's offence.

[&]quot;The nearer we are to a Divine Person, the more we adore and recognise what He is."

CHRIST FORMED IN YOU.

READINGS AT CROYDON. No. 2.

GAL. ii. 20; iv. 28-31; v. 1.

WE have to bear in mind that both the Corinthians and Galatians had departed from the simple teaching of Romans, yet they are not turned back to it, but they are corrected by a fuller apprehension of the truth from which they had departed. They had both received the Holy Ghost, and the marvel is, that they should have wandered from the simplicity of the truth. The Corinthians made their own minds the arbiter of their acts. The Spirit of God is grieved if you supersede Him. They had fallen into disorder in every circle—Church, family, everywhere.

Now the Galatians were trying to improve themselves by keeping the law. It is very important for us to see how they are corrected. In both cases it is by giving Christ His true place. The Corinthians are reminded that they were brought to God, and hence beholding the Lord's glory there was no place for the natural man, but they would be transformed into the same image. Our subject now is, how a Christian is delivered from trying to improve the flesh.

Would you kindly tell us the teaching of Romans from which they had departed?

The two great things in Romans are acceptance and liberty. Romans v. is, God cannot be on better terms with me. I do not doubt that people try to get chap.

viii. before the v. The prodigal did not get the viii. before the v.

It is as much a departure from Christianity to fall into the evils that we find in Corinth as it is to improve the flesh as in Galatians?

Quite so. There are two great subjects, acceptance and liberty. Our acceptance with God was accomplished on the cross. If you believe on Him that raised up Christ from the dead, you are justified. It is summed up in Romans v. 11-" We . . . joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation." Our translators could not get beyond atonement, because they did not understand reconciliation. These eleven verses set forth the terms on which God is with you, and how God feels toward you. Then comes another thing, and that is where the trial is, and where it was with the prodigal-I am not fit for God. How is that to be met? God has removed everything from His own eye in the cross, and as you have simple faith you see it is all gone. Now He gives you the Holy Ghost. Hence Romans viii, begins with "In Christ," "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." You cannot believe the number of Christians who are damaged, because they seek their freedom from sin by faith, instead of by the Spirit of God. It is faith in Romans v., but it is the Spirit of God in Rom. viii. Why? Because it is true to God always that the man under judgment has gone in the cross; but it is only true to me when I am walking in the Spirit.

Then is the flesh set aside in the eighth chapter?

There are four operations there. In the first thirteen verses the Spirit is master of the flesh. The

mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." It is

not by resolution. Do you understand now? Do you understand the difference between the Spirit of God and resolution? Resolution is the work of your own will. The Spirit of God is God's will. "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." It is not the mortification of the body, but of the deeds of the body. The Spirit in you is master of the

flesh. I cannot use the Spirit except faith is in activity?

You have to accept in faith that you are committed to death. Therefore Romans vi. and vii. is the battle-

ground. You are committed to the death of Christ by baptism. You accept this first, and then it is carried out by the Spirit of God. In Romans vi. faith could say the old man is

crucified. Quite true in the eye of God, but you cannot carry

it out but by the Spirit. Galatians ii. 20 is the carrying it out. So "I am crucified with Christ" would not apply to

It is experimental.

everybody?

Paul is speaking for himself?

Yes; it is experimental. "Our old man is crucified with Him," that is the thing for your faith to see with God. But when you come to enter into the reality of it you can say, "I am crucified with Christ."

It is always true for faith?

When you lose your temper is it true to you? Is it true then, that you are not in the flesh? It is true to God, but not true to you. If you were walking in the

it is faith, because God never alters. You cannot improve your acceptance with Him. He never deviates from His acceptance. He never reverts to the old man. Now come to your side. If you could be in keeping with Him you would be all right. You have received the Holy Ghost that you may be so. In Romans viii. vou are in Christ. There is no condemnation there. You have

changed your man. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the "righteous requirement" of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." That is liberty. There is first acceptance, then liberty. What are the four sections?

The first is, the Spirit is master of the flesh; the second, your dignity here as a son; third, you are in a groaning creation, but you will have a glorified body; fourth, you have a Friend-the Spirit of God-and He knows what you want. You know not what to pray for as you ought, but He makes intercession for you, and you get many things you never prayed for at all. Therefore we read, "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?"

But now the apostle labours that Christ might be formed in them. Many Christians have gone to the law to try and correct themselves, and many of us have. For years after I knew everything was gone from the eye of God, when I looked at myself it was not gone from me, because I was trying to improve it. It is a great thing to see that God has not only cleared everything away from His eye, but He says, "I have given you the Holy Ghost, and in the Holy Ghost you are as free from it as I am, but you must walk in the Spirit."

I suppose that is why it says, "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."

Exactly. If the flesh be resisted, it is by the Spirit. I think we don't make enough of the Spirit. Many a one speaks of the work of Christ, but little of the work of the Spirit. He is your Friend. Be sure neither the flesh, nor the world is your friend. Who is your friend down here? You have only One. Do you know how to find out the good of a friend? Use him. Well now, it is interesting to see how the apostle

corrects the Galatians. He takes the type of the weaning of Isaac. Isaac and Ishmael were in the house together—one was born after the flesh, the other after the Spirit. The Galatians were like this. There was the legal man, born after the flesh, and Christ was there also, but He was not given His right place. That is the state of many a Christian. It is a wonderful day, the coronation-day, when Christ gets His place.

Do you connect it with verse 19?

Yes, because the apostle is showing the way it comes to you. He wants to get them to this point, and the way to get to it is to give Christ His place. The marvellous grace is that Christ lives in you. It is a Person lives in you. One person has gone, another has come in.

What is the difference between Christ living in us and Christ being formed in us?

He could not live in you if He were not formed in you. You see in the type that when Isaac was weaned there was a great feast; he was to have a recognised position. Ishmael and Isaac had been going on together as is the case with many believers. Ishmael born after the flesh, Abraham's son, brought up in his house, was there. While all the 318 servants were acknowledging Isaac as the heir, this Ishmael, a youth of fourteen, mocked. That is, the cultivated man does not like Christ. It is a terrible fact—the legal man does not like Christ. Isaac was acknowledged. I believe it is a wonderful moment when Christ gets His place. The great good of it is this. Once you have acknowledged Him, you will not have a good conscience if you do not continue doing so. There is a moment when you have done it, but if to-morrow you are drawn away by Ishmael, until Christ be restored to His right place in your heart you will not be happy, you will be like a bird with a wounded wing.

Is not that the secret of holiness?

Unquestionably. That is the coronation day. Christ has not got His right place in the world, but, thank God, He has it in your hearts. "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." There is not a word here about your sins—the old man has gone. Christ only is left. It is very simple. You acknowledge Him. If you are not true to Christ you cannot be true to anybody. I have seen it in Christians, when they were not faithful to God they were not faithful to anybody. You see, it depends upon acknowledgment. I acknowledge Him in His right place. The moment you acknowledge Him in

His right place, you cannot tolerate Ishmael. If Christ has His place, Ishmael has no place.

Then the coronation day is to go on continually?

By the Spirit of God. You are always happy when He keeps you up to your highest point. You never see a Christian unhappy, but he has let go the top round of the ladder. Mark the Scripture, "Whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing." Souls who are declining

already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing." Souls who are declining lose first the top shoot; a gardener knows that if the top shoot is checked the plant is not doing well. The top shoot always suffers first. You never saw a Christian declining who did not give up the best bit of truth he had. It is the very opposite to the man of the world. If there is a fire or any danger, he makes every effort to save the best. The Christian loses his best first.

What is the secret of keeping on the top round?

CHRIST. Christ has got His right place, and the intruder is turned out. Oh, you say, the intruder can come in, for he knows the house well! If I put him out at the door, he will come in at the window. The word to you is, "Stand fast... in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free."

Read chapter v. 17: "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." Is that translated rightly? It should be "that ye may not." This has been a great light to me. Our translators preferred their conscience to their learning. I wish they had kept to the meaning of the original. It is the very reverse. The Spirit lusteth against the flesh. I have

got a Friend in me now. I used to say that I believed the flesh was stronger than grace. I dare not say so now, because I have this verse to prove that if the Spirit of God is there, He is stronger than the flesh.

It is very important, that remark about losing the best bit of truth. Is the reason this—that the best truth needs full spiritual power to retain it?

Quite so. You know it in natural things. If the extremities are cold, there is a lack of vitality.

Is that why we have the warning, "hold fast"?

Exactly, and therefore you will often find a believer with less light more vigorous than one with more light, because he is walking up to his light. The Spirit of God has no check; He is not grieved with the latter, for he is walking up to the measure of what he has got. The Spirit's object is always Christ.

Are all prepared to make the start? Sometimes it is grievous to us to cast out Ishmael.

I want righteousness first. I am not uneasy about Ishmael if I give Christ His right place. I shall not make Ishmael first if I am making Isaac first, for then Ishmael must go, I cannot tolerate him.

Is it not a common snare to attempt to make Ishmael subject to Isaac?

Yes, and they think that Isaac will improve Ishmael. No! Ishmael must be cast out; you are doing an act of simple righteousness when you acknowledge Christ's right to all. He has the right to you, and hence Paul says, "Christ liveth in me." People speak of eternal life as if they had received it independently for themselves, whereas it is the Person who is the life who lives in you.

What prevents me from turning Ishmael out?

Because you do not really desire to give Isaac his place. Ishmael was in the house fourteen years, Isaac only one year; but he was not weaned, he was not yet acknowledged. You never can displace Ishmael until you see that Christ has the right to you. He died for you. You cannot keep Ishmael out but by the Spirit of God. If we walk in the Spirit we shall not fulfil

the lust of the flesh. "If we live in the Spirit, let us

also walk in the Spirit."

Do you call that conflict?

Yes, there is conflict to continue here practically. This experience surpasses that of Romans vii. There you learned your inability to keep the law. Here you find that the most cultivated sentiment man has does not like Christ. The greatest effort all around us is to make Adam love Christ. It is impossible.

You said that there was no use in armour if you are not in battle. There are many Christians, who are not engaged in battle, who would be in Galatians v.

This is different to Ephesians vi. There it is heavenly conflict with Satan, while here it is with the flesh. I don't say Satan is not at the bottom of it; but you are not on heavenly ground here, and therefore not opposed by the seven nations. There are Amalek and Balaam and the seven nations.

Many Christians know nothing of the conflict of Ephesians vi. Could we say they do not know this?

I do not believe any Christian is exempted from this who has given Christ His place. I believe this conflict goes on, but it is a victorious conflict, because you must succeed if you walk in the Spirit. You cannot succeed

in Romans vii. You find out your own incompetence there. "In me (that is, in my flesh), dwelleth no good thing." Would this be a good answer to give to anyone who says, "I am so often defeated." You have not given Christ His right place? I believe it would. It is a never-to-be-forgotten moment. I think the

great question to be asked is, "What is walking in the Spirit?" I give the answer a sailor gave when asked, "How do you get on in rough weather?" He said, "I don't mind so long as I can see the sun." Where is your eye? Is it on Christ? Keep your eye on Him, and there is no fear for you. Perhaps you intend to visit some one. Keep your eye on Christ, and you will get on very well. The next visit you pay may be quite different. Your eye is not on Christ. You

are thinking of being useful. The Spirit of God occupies you with nothing but Christ.

Exactly. He testifies not of Himself, but of Christ, Is walking in the Spirit the result of Christ having

His right place? You see that you are in liberty when Christ has His right place, therefore we read, "Stand fast . . . in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free." The Spirit of God will never maintain liberty in you until He has put Christ in His right place.

Is Galatians ii. 20 Jordan?

No. I do not think you touch Jordan in it. In Romans vou do not go over Jordan.

Is the coronation-day when Christ is formed in you?

Yes; He is formed in you when He gets His place. If you study Gal. ii. 20 you will see that nothing is plainer. The old man is gone. On the cross "I am crucified with Christ." You have changed from Adam to Christ. You do not appear in Adam before God. You appear in Christ.

Is it the same as leaving your first love?

It is leaving your first love, if after you have known Him you do not give Him His place. You are like the Bride in Canticles v., and the way you are restored is by dwelling upon the beauties of His person. (See vv. 10-16.)

Can you not say a word more about restoration? You said, I think, it was by dwelling on the beauties of Christ one gets right?

You recover your lost footing. It will come out.

You cannot know when there is a reserve between yourself and another, but in proportion to your intimacy. If you have only a passing acquaintance with a person, you do not feel casual reserve. "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me."

The day comes when Ishmael is cast out. Is it not an important thing to bear in mind that he has to be kept out?

That is where the Spirit of God acts for you. A person might say, "But Ishmael knows the way in." I say, If you are walking in the Spirit, he will not come in. You have One dwelling in you who is greater than the flesh. The body is the Lord's, and He directs its course throughout. If you want a sample of a man who is dead, you get it in Jonah in the whale. He was alive, but he had no will of his own. I am quite

alive, but it is His will I am governed by.

Is that living "by the faith of the Son of God"?

It comes down to this, you are living as He lived down here.

Is that the faith that has Christ for its object?

Quite so. He is the object, and the example, and the power to carry you into His path. It will come out when we come to the wilderness. Practically, you have not the man who is crucified living in you, but Christ living in you, and until you learn this step you will not get on to the next, "the life which I now live in the flesh," &c. No person will get on until Christ gets His place.

You never make any progress whatever till then. You cannot have part with Him if you have not given Him His place in you. If you do not take this step we are on to-night you will never make the least progress.

Could this be called practical deliverance?

I was trying to get a word to convey it. A Galatian is one who has begun rightly, and has seen by faith the work of Christ for him, but is seeking perfection in the flesh by the law, holiness by faith, &c. Hence it is in advance of the deliverance in Rom. viii. 2. It is not merely the law of the Spirit, but you can say, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

Did I understand you to say that we do not walk in the Spirit by trying to, but by being occupied with Christ?

Quite right, but we do not defer enough to the Spirit. A person who has received the Spirit has a new power. I think the more you understand what it is to be helped by the Spirit, the more you feel that you want help.

Could you say that a person who knows this is practically delivered?

I think he could not be delivered otherwise. Still I can understand that a soul may be in Romans viii.

and saying I am free, but your self is not personally displaced, and Christ superseding you until you come to Galatians ii. 20. It is the most absolute deliverance.

Must it be a continuous thing?

It is; it is not merely that I am free from the flesh, but the Person who has made me free lives in me.

"If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin."

Yes, and that is the same word as in Colossians—"Christ in you, the hope of glory," and yet it is a different side altogether.

Then you would say that Galatians ii. 20 is the same thing as Romans viii. 2, only more advanced?

Yes. Here Christ liveth in you.

Could one call the one deliverance, the other liberty?

Romans was the groundwork, but the Corinthians and the Galatians had departed from it. And in our day we can see how restoration can be effected. Restoration always sets you morally higher than you were before departure.

If this practical déliverance were going on Ishmael could not get in again.

If you walk in the Spirit you are free from the flesh, though the flesh is always trying to get a place.

Can we say deliverance is practically known in the measure in which Christ is given His right place?

I should say so.

Does not Galatians ii. 20 start with death?

Yes. Until the old man is displaced Christ cannot get His place. It is by the Spirit of God that you appropriate the death of Christ. No one could put

himself to death. Have you noticed that, in the first edition of the Synopsis, Mr. Darby makes Rom. vi. standing, while in the last he makes it experimental? People try to accept death with respect to the old man by faith. If it were always true of you, you could. It is always true of you in the eye of God—hold that by faith.

There is a positive side in Romans vi.—alive unto God.

Certainly, because it is in the same Person, by whose death you are severed from the old man, that you now live. You are to reckon yourself to be dead indeed unto sin but alive unto God in Christ Jesus. You are committed to death in Rom. vi. In Rom. viii. 13 you carry it out. You must believe it though first?

I quite agree that you believe you are committed to it; but you must have the Spirit to carry it out.

Is "always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus" connected with it?

Yes, it is the practical consequence.

Is Christ being formed in you progressive?

If you say growing in you, that is, getting a larger place in you, I admit it; but being formed in you is not. No doubt He does get more place. If we had another reading on this subject we should probably get more. Yet "if any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know." The very thing I know best is the thing I feel that I do not know well. If you hear one speaking of the love of God you think,—Do I know it? Perhaps it is the very truth you know most of, but it is so great to you, you think you hardly know it.

J. B. S.

CHRIST OUR MOTIVE.

It has often been observed that in the Epistle to the Philippians Christ is presented as the motive, pattern, object, and power of the Christian, each chapter giving us these facts respectively.

It has also been pointed out that Christianity is

therein viewed as the practical experience of the apostle, who was used in writing it; and full of interest it is to notice how, for instance in chapter i., that blessed motive operates in his heart. Now, we must own that the heart is often governed by motives which, if not selfish, are frequently mixed, and that grace alone can give a spring of affection that is wholly according to God. But this chapter shows us how fully the apostle was under this wondrous motive-power, how he was swayed and controlled by Christ in his varied relations, whether with regard to the Philippians, the preaching of Christ in their midst, or his own life as a man, and a servant of Christ.

With reference to the first of these we read, in verse

With reference to the first of these we read, in verse 8, "For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ."

Words strong and tender these! Not only did he love these true-hearted young Christians, but he did so in "the bowels of Jesus Christ." He yearned over them. He could thank his God for the whole remembrance of them. There had not been a cloud of sorrow to darken that memory. Their testimony had been peculiarly bright. They had fellowship with the gospel in all its

difficulties; nor had they been daunted by its sufferings. The birthplace of that church was amid the fires of persecution, and this fact gave a steadiness and a living reality to their after-course. What they had witnessed in the apostle had furnished an example to themselves. There was every thing in them that led him to long after them all in the love and ion and supportly of

In the apostle had furnished an example to themselves. There was every thing in them that led him to long after them all in the love, and joy, and sympathy of Jesus Christ. And this produced the most earnest solicitude. He prayed for them that their love might abound "more and more in knowledge and in all judgment." He desired no curtailment of that love. Fervent at first, it should yet become more so; it should abound more and more. The prevalence of iniquity should not make it wax cold; nay, contrariwise, it should be intensified in its beautiful course—only it should be regulated by knowledge and by judgment. These should be the rails on which this mighty engine should speed along. Without such guides it might pursue a headlong course, for love is blind; but, thus

for "God is love."

Thus they would "try the things that differ be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God."

directed, it would tell a tale of surpassing charm, it would make known, in a practical way, the truth itself,

Such were the desires that filled the heart of Paul for them; such were his longings, in the bowels of Jesus Christ, over them; and such is the desire of the Lord, we may safely say, for His people to-day. He would have us sincere, without offence, and full of the fruits of righteousness, in view of His coming.

And we too, in our own little measure, long for each other; we too pray for the welfare of the Church, and for the growth of the saints in grace and faithfulness to the Lord; but when we compare our desires with those of the apostle, our longings with his, our prayers with his, our motives with his, how immense, alas! is the difference. What we need, beloved, in a day that is admittedly difficult, is the bowels of Jesus Christ—those deep and tender compassions that led Him to

those deep and tender compassions that led Him to His wondrous and inimitable self-sacrifice, when He "loved the church, and gave Himself for it." How a deeper sense of that love would lead us to stoop and wash one another's feet, not resting content with merely communicating fuller truth, or correcting false apprehensions, but diligently seeking to leave no stone unturned so that blessing might reach the souls of all that are dear to the Lord. In the power of such a motive all self-interest would be set aside. We should seek not theirs, but them. We should connect them with the day of Christ, and earnestly yearn that their present state might answer to their glorified condition on that day. Then again, if we think of how he regarded the preaching of Christ in their midst, and recollect that it

Then again, it we think of how he regarded the preaching of Christ in their midst, and recollect that it was being done by some who hoped thereby to add affliction to the apostle's bonds. Some, who were no friends of his, animated perhaps by jealousy, and seeking to increase his sufferings, but even then he rejoiced that Christ was being preached. He could not commend their spirit, nor ignore the fact that it was prompted by envy and strife; none the less it was Christ they preached, and therein he rejoiced. Hence we notice how, in the exercise of this powerful motive, he was

raised above personal feelings, and above considerations for his own safety. Happy and large-hearted servant of Christ! Whatever exalted the Master, no matter the cost to himself, was precious to Paul.

"Christ is preached," said he, "and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice." Such was the cause of his joy. Christ was made known. As to the spirit and ways of those who did so he could easily leave that with One who can correctly appraise all our actions. The Lord appreciates aright our spirit, thoughts, words and ways, and will award accordingly.

Do we, beloved, rejoice in the preaching of Christ, even when the mode and manner of the preacher may fail to commend themselves to our judgment? We may detect something in his style, his plan of procedure, or his associations, that appear to us irregular, and, indeed, may be so; yet, if it be Christ he presents, is it not our highest wisdom to rejoice in that, and leave the rest with his Master, to whom alone he stands or falls? The manner is, after all, secondary, the matter is the chief concern, and a heart that is governed by the blessed motive that constrained the apostle Paul will rejoice in knowing that Christ is preached.

Lastly, when we view him in relation to his own life, we find him saying, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." (v. 21.) His life was in jeopardy; he was in a Roman prison, and at the mercy of a godless emperor; eyet he could calmly and truly say that to him to live was Christ, that he had therefore a life that was superior to temporal vicissitudes, one that was affected neither by storm nor sunshine, neither by prison walls nor by liberty, neither by circumstances of

earthly comfort nor of earthly woe, in fact, that to die would be gain. Beautiful superiority! And yet it is the portion of all to whom the first sentence is true. If, dear reader, to you to live is Christ, then to you to die is gain, for the Christ of Paul is your Christ also, and you may fully claim the comfort and peace he enjoyed. The grace that filled his large cup may, and can, fill your small one.

On the other hand, if to you to live is self, then to die is loss, sad, irreparable loss. Hence the reason why death is secretly dreaded. It necessitates the relinquishment of that to which self clings; that gone, all is gone. But when Christ is all, then death only places you in fuller possession. It is a positive gain.

And such a gain was dear to Paul, yet he could say,

"To abide in the flesh is more needful to you." He could forego, for their sakes, this unspeakable gain; he would, for the sake of the church, face the sorrow and trial of apostolic life below, in order to be a help to the saints whom he loved so dearly. Thus self was set aside by the operation of this mighty motive—a motive produced by the Spirit of God in the soul that is created in Christ Jesus—a motive which, in Paul, expressed itself in the deepest solicitude for the saints, the greatest delight in the fact that Christ was preached, and a total disregard of personal interests and desires.

What a motive, and what a Christ for its spring and source! Beloved, may we all know more and more of this motive.

J. W. S.

GENESIS xlviii. 14.

HAVE you put your hand on the head of the right man? Jacob, though a saint of God, only did so on his death-bed. To put the hand on the head means in Scripture identification. It is to say, "I identify myself with thee." It was done in the case of the burnt-offering. The offerer thus identified himself with the value of the sacrifice, with all therefore that Christ was to God in all the excellencies of His person. (Leviticus i. 4, 17.) In the sin-offering again, (Leviticus iv. 4, 12, 15, 21, 27, 29, 33, &c.) Christ identifies Himself in grace with sin; that is, with all that is in us which is obnoxious to God. It is transferred to Him. The main part of Jacob's life, as we may see, was spent by him in putting his hand on the head of the wrong man. His life was mostly passed in planning, and plotting, and scheming for Jacob's advantage. For even in the Old Testament God continually shewed that He could get no fruit from the fallen man; and faith owned it, although the second Man had not yet appeared. Although the full setting aside of the first man was not revealed till the cross, yet faith got God's judgment of it very early. We see this admitted by Job (chap. xlii. 5, 6), and also taught to Abraham in type (Genesis xv. 8-18) and to others. Fruit was ever only in new birth.

Our everyday-life, therefore, as Christians should be-

hand on the head of the right man. If we do not do this we shall have to do it (as Jacob had to do it) at the close of our earthly history. God WILL have His way. This one act of Jacob's life is the only one recorded in Hebrews xi, as an act of faith on Jacob's part. "By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph: and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff." God's thought was made known to him at last, and faith triumphed. He said at the end what we all ought to say at the beginning, "Not this man, the man here, though the eldest born, and the first on the scene, but that Man is the man of God's counsel." Manasseh was the eldest born, but Ephraim, and not Manasseh, is the man of God's choice. (1 Cor. xv. 46, 47.) Jacob at last bowed to a truth which in his life he had practically refused. In faith now he guided his hands "wittingly," and laid his right hand on the head of the younger-born, on Ephraim. In faith Jacob is here beyond Joseph. Joseph was still occupied with nature and sight. But his firstborn Manasseh (forgetfulness) is only negative, and in the man of God's choice there is God seeking positive delight to His own heart. Ephraim (fruitfulness) is what God desires to find, and He has found

in the daily path of any soul apart from Christ displayed in him.

In one way this final act of Jacob's is sad, although a triumph of God's grace. It is sad to see a saint of God, only when on his death-bed, owning the mistake of a whole lifetime, and such a case I

it in Christ, when the whole race of the first man was a moral ruin before Him. There is no fruit for God then

think we have before us in Jacob. A believer now might, like Jacob, have faith in God for his salvation from hell, and yet not in his daily life be identifying himself with Christ and Christ's path through this world. He might be thus laying his hand practically (and not in faith) on the wrong man. On two occasions Jacob reviews his past life and gives us his own judgment of it. One is when he is overtaken by Laban, the other is when he stood before Pharaoh. If we read these two we shall see that, in the one case he reviews what his life had been when away, through his own self-will, from the place of testimony; in the other he contrasts his past life with the lives of his fathers (Abraham and Isaac), who had been preserved in faithfulness in the land, the true place of testimony. It is all a sad review. And when one asks. Is it the record of a life of faith? one turns from it with a sense of relief to read rather the review of a past life from the lips of another saint-the apostle Paul. He says, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." No regrets and no sorrow come into the apostle's contemplation here, and the "henceforth," the future prospect, is all bright. "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day." How completely does the end answer to the life! It is the record of a man who could say even when he lived here, "For to me to live is Christ." He was not merely a converted man, but he had identified himself on earth with the right MAN—the man of God's choice, and Saul was therefore refused.

How blessed is this knowledge of faith! Jacob

"guided his hands wittingly," i.e. he knew, at last, the mind of God, and acted on it. But Scripture adds an important word to this account of Jacob's act. It tells us, he "worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff."

Where do you read of this word "worship" in any part of Jacob's former history? It is, as to him, an entirely new word. He had built altars, and erected pillars, but in all of them he himself figures largely,

and enters into a kind of compact with God (see Genesis xxviii. 20-22; xxxiii. 20; xxxv. 3-7), and even in the last case (which is the best) this word "worship" is not found. What have we then, beyond

them all, in this death-bed scene? I believe we have the paramount and eclipsing act of faith. No matter what you believe (for Jacob was a believer), it is valueless if you do not act upon it. And the actions are expressed in a man's every-day life. This last act of Jacob is therefore beyond every other, because in it he identifies himself with the right Man. Is worship hindered, then, if self intrude and is allowed? Or can anyone truly worship who is not living on earth that "life of faith" which says, "I am identified with Christ

here"? Remember that on this occasion "the eyes of Israel were dim with age, so that he could not see." No! The long day of sight was for ever gone for him, and must now give place to the day of faith. And then

it is that we read for the first time that Jacob "worshipped."

No doubt "sight" is the opposite of "faith," and belongs to the man that is here (2 Cor. iv. 18; x. 7, 12), while faith closes the human and natural eye, and looks at things with God, having for its object the

Man that is there. As I have already remarked, faith

says, "Not this man, but THAT MAN;" but faith says this not only at the beginning, but all along the daily path—the "life of faith." (Heb. xi.)

It is now, not when we come to our death-bed (if we should have one), that we should be found, as believers. guiding our hands "wittingly." I close, then, these few remarks with the question which was pressed upon me to ask at the beginning. Here are and have I mut

few remarks with the question which was pressed upon me to ask at the beginning, Have you, and have I, put our hands on the head of the right Man? And if so, does not the poor, feeble way in which it comes out in our every-day life humble us to the very dust? May

God graciously grant us a reviving of the true testimony, that Christ may be seen in us. We are not left on earth to get on in business, or to "make us a name,"

but to display Christ, which the Spirit of God "forms" in the believer (Gal. iv. 19) when he is subject to the Spirit, as clay in the hands of the potter. But I think that Christ must be thus first "formed" in us before He can be seen from us in our daily path. However much we support the man that is here in the

activities of human will, God will NEVER change His judgment as to the Man of His counsel. (Phil. ii. 9-11.) And at the last we must, and shall, come to the same judgment about it as God Himself has expressed.

H. C. A.

SCRIPTURE NOTES.

T.

Psalm xl.

It is often the case that the result of the experiences described in a psalm is given at the commencement. This, stated in a verse or two, becomes the theme or

subject, and then what follows leads up to, explains, or illustrates it. This is notably so in the psalm before us. The last clause of the last verse is, "Make no tarrying, O my God." The three first verses give the answer: "I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry," etc. The psalm really begins with verse 5, and then in the next verse, as we learn from Hebrew x., we are introduced into an eternal scene, a solemn transaction between God and His beloved Son in a past eternity. This is shown by the words, "Mine ears hast Thou opened," interpreted in Hebrews x. by, "A body hast Thou prepared me." The incarnation of our blessed Lord was thus in prospect in view of His coming into this world to do the will of God. (vv. 7, 8.) In vv. 9, 10 the Lord's life of testimony is set forth; and the reader will delight to remark and ponder upon its fulness and perfection as embodied in the various words employed. It embraced "righteousness," God's "faithfulness" and "salvation," also His "loving-kindness" and His "truth." Its perfection appears in the fact that He says, "I have preached"; "I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, Thou knowest"; "I have not hid Thy righteousness within my heart"; "I have declared"; "I have not concealed," etc. Blessed Lord, Thou didst not withhold a single word; Thou didst always speak where Thy God would have Thee to speak, and Thou wast always silent when He would have Thee silent. Thou wast perfect in speech and perfect in silence! Even as Thou didst Thyself say, "I have not spoken of [from] myself; but the Father . . . gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak." Verily Thou wast the faithful and true Witness, blessed be Thy name! Verse 11 teaches that He lived

by what He proclaimed—by God's loving-kindness and truth which He had not concealed from the great congregation. The next verse leads up to the cross, and the Lord is seen as having made the sins of His people His own, so that He can say, "Mine iniquities," even if atonement is not completed. In Psalm xxii. we are permitted to behold Him making expiation-passing through death-and in resurrection. Here, while the fact of deliverance is afterwards stated, it scarcely goes beyond His taking His people's place, bearing and confessing their sins. It is the sorrows of this position which evoke the cry for deliverance (v. 13), a cry which, after distinguishing between His enemies and those that seek Jehovah and love His salvation (the remnant), is again repeated in entire confidence in the last verse. This will help us to understand what has been already said, that the first three verses give the full response to Messiah's cry, and His new song wherein He associates with Himself the believing remnant. Verse 4 contains the testimony of the Holy Spirit to the blessedness of the man that maketh the Lord his trust; and the next (the last really) gives a burst of praise from the Spirit of Christ in His redeemed: "Many, O Lord my God, are Thy wonderful works which Thou hast done, and Thy thoughts which are to us-ward." What tender grace! Commencing with "O Lord my God," the clause ends with to us-ward. Whatever our blessed Lord secures by His sufferings and death, He shares with His own. So boundless, moreover, are the thoughts and purposes of God's love concerning Christ and His saints, that they cannot be reckoned up or numbered. Truly His grace is infinite!

II.

Hedrews ix. 25-27.

"SIN" and "sins" are very clearly distinguished in this scripture; and it is of great importance that the distinction between the two should be clearly apprehended. Let it be noticed however first, that the contrast is drawn between the many sacrifices offered under the law, and the one sacrifice of Christ. word "once" therefore in vv. 26, 28 is full of significance. Remembrance again of sins was made every year by the annual recurrence of the day of atonement in the old dispensation; but Christ has perfected for ever them that are sanctified by His one offering. His sacrificial work has thus been finished for ever; and it is on the ground of this that the sins of His people (of believers) have been taken away, and that sin will be put away out of the world. It is to this latter truth that the Baptist refers when he says, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away [the Taker-away of] the sin of the world." It is not said "who has taken away," for it is the Person rather who will do it that John indicates. The foundation on which He will do it is His own glorious work on the cross-a work which from its very nature and perfection could not be repeated; but not until after the great white throne, and until the introduction of the new heaven and the new earth, will this blessed result—the putting away of sin—be witnessed. But the sins of believers are so entirely removed that they await with hope and expectation the appearing of Christ the second time, without sin, unto salvation. The Person and the work of Christ thus constitute the pillars of redemption and the foundation of the new creation.

"THE FATHER LOVETH THE SON."

Melody-" The Christian's Good-night."

LORD JESUS CHRIST, in glorious worth made known, In truth and love revealed, the Father's Son; In Thee, by Thee, the Father's will is done;

Thy Father rests in Thee.

We bless Thee for the deep, unbounded grace
That brought Thee down, Lord, from Thy glory's place,
E'en where, from Thee, Thy God must hide His face;
Thy God forsaking Thee.

'T is finished now; Thy witness-works are done;
Works given by the Father to the Son.
Thou, Lord, through shame, through death, Thy meed hast won;
Power, praise, belong to Thee.

All power is Thine, in heaven and in earth; Lord Jesus Christ, Thy name, Thy glorious worth, Must be proclaimed, till all the scene of dearth Is filled with song for Thee.

Thy Father's house, to Thee, Lord, known so well, Its glories Thou, the "Stranger" here, didst tell; And there Thine own, in bliss, with Thee shall dwell, For ever, Lord, with Thee.

The home of love, the harvest-fields, are Thine; Thine to dispense the "gifts"—corn, oil, and wine; For, first and last, in His complete design,

Thy God exalteth Thee.

'T is bliss with Thee, for Thee, O Lord, to live;
By Thee delight to God, Thy God, to give;
From life's own Fount for ever to receive
Grace, truth—God's praise of Thee.

Thou, shorn by men of all Thy due, wert "dumb"; But now God's answer to Thy woes hath come; His glory tells for evermore the sum

Of joy, His joy, in THEE.

W. K. B. E.

THE ELECT LADY.

2 John.

BOTH the second and the third epistles of John are, as to form, personal letters, but as to their contents they possess an abiding importance for the people of God in all ages. In harmony with the apostle's line they yet contain instructions (not elsewhere found) which furnish guidance for perplexed souls in a day of departure from the truth, and when the signs of the coming apostasy are multiplying on every hand. It is not a little remarkable that the one who has often been termed the apostle of love should be the chosen instrument for the unsparing exposure of false teachers. (See 1 John ii. 18-23; iv. 1-6.) We may learn from this fact the immense difference between divine love and that catholicity of sentiment which, passing under the guise of charity, is nothing less than Laodicean lukewarmness and indifference to the truth. former is of God, the latter is from man.

This characteristic difference is seen from the address to the elect lady and her children, "whom," John says, "I love in the truth; and," as he proceeds to add, "not I only, but also all they that have known the truth." The love therefore which John entertained for this godly saint and her children was both formed and limited (if limits can be spoken of when the subject is infinite) by the truth—by the revelation of God in Christ. Outside of this blessed circle the apostle's heart did not, and could not, flow, in so far as he was controlled by the Holy Ghost. This is at once seen

when John adds, "but also all they that have known the truth." Every heart, in other words, that cherishes the truth must love those who are also under its power, and it will be expressed moreover "for the truth's sake which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever." No doubt that human affection, springing from partialities and preferences, is often mistaken for divine love; but such a scripture as this supplies the needed test and corrective. Even the salutation (v. 3) confirms this, inasmuch as it closes with the words "in truth and love," binding these two things together in an indissoluble union.

The aged apostle had been filled with joy in that he had found the elect lady's children walking in truth, "as we have received a commandment from the Father" It was not enough for the beloved disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, that these souls were converted. What made him rejoice greatly was, that, having been converted, their lives were governed by the truth. Conversion is indeed an unspeakable mercy, but it is not everything. It is the introduction to a new sphere, in which Christ may be glorified in walk and ways. In order to this the truth must be apprehended, and hence the need of systematic instruction for young believers after they have been brought to the knowledge of Christ as their Saviour. The Lord Himself showed His solicitude for the lambs, as well as for the sheep, in His charge to Peter after his restoration. And the only safeguards for the babes in the family of God, as is taught in the first epistle, in the presence of seductive errors, are the Spirit and the word of God. Let those, then, who are older in the divine life, ever seek to help the younger to be found walking in the truth.

The apostle gives next a commandment, not a new one, but "that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another." "From the beginning" will refer, according to John's usage of this expression, to the presence of Christ on the earth, and may consequently be an allusion to the words, "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you." (John xv. 12.) And observe that, as to the spiritual life, this is the only precept John sends to the elect lady. How much, however, is involved in it! There could not be the exhibition of love to the saints without the divine nature, "for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God" (1 John iv. 7); and wherever love is thus expressed it is the divine nature in activity. It would not be too much to say, therefore, that for the mutual love of the saints there must be the enjoyment of God's love, and thus necessarily an ungrieved Spirit. Love to one another is love in communion with the

If, however, the apostle reminds the elect lady of the constant obligation of the divine nature, he will not leave her in any uncertainty as to the real character of love. "And this is love, that we walk after His commandments." He had said in the first epistle, "By this we know that we love the children of God,

heart of God, and is, as Paul teaches, the spring of holiness in walk and conduct. (1 Thess. iii. 12, 13.)

when we love God, and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments." (Chap. v. 2, 3.) Love which is of God can only flow forth according to the nature of God, and thus in divine channels. Now the commandments of God are

the expressions of His nature, of what He is, and are in this way revelations of Himself to us in, and through, the living Word. We have, therefore, infallible directions for the love of which John speaks. Neglecting these, confusion must be produced among the people of God to their spiritual loss and damage. Love edifieth, but only when it is manifested according to God, when, that is, we walk according to His commandments. For if through grace we possess a divine nature, it must express itself after the pattern of its divine original as seen in Christ when down here upon the earth; and then every expression of love to one another becomes, at the same time, a revelation of the heart of Christ. Moreover, "if we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us." Into what an infinite circle of divine blessedness then does loving one another introduce us!

Nothing so preserves the saints from erroneous and false teachings as walking in the power of the truth. The nearer we are to Christ the more readily we detect what is not of Him; even as He said, "My sheep hear my voice"—"they know not the voice of strangers." So here the apostle first urges walking in "the commandment," and then warns the elect lady of surrounding dangers. Many deceivers, he says, have entered ("gone out" is a better reading) into the world; but they could be discerned from the fact that they did not confess Jesus Christ come in flesh. It was not so much a denial of the incarnation (although this might be included) as the refusal to own, and bow to, the claims and authority of Christ as "come

in the flesh." This John solemnly affirms is the deceiver and the antichrist; that is, we apprehend, the spirit of antagonism to Christ and His claims, which will eventually culminate and find expression in the man of sin. (Compare 1 John ii. 18-22.) The final form of hostility to Christ and Christianity may be thus gathered from current teachings. What need for holy vigilance in the power of the Holy Ghost!

In the next exhortation (v. 8) a principle is contained, which is everywhere affirmed in the Scriptures. It teaches that the best preservative against declension, or seduction, lies in the cultivation of our own spiritual condition. (Compare Acts xx. 28, 1 Tim. iv. 16.) We learn, moreover, that the apostle in his ministry was encouraged by the prospect of enjoying its fruits in glory. He had already alluded to this in the first epistle (chap. ii, 28); and here he more formally states it on the positive side, in that he speaks of receiving "a full reward," It is no question of salvation, as the reader will at once perceive; for this is pure and sovereign grace. But the Lord, although He Himself gives the ability for, and the privilege of, service, is pleased to attach a recompense to His servant's fidelity. John therefore exhorted the elect lady and her children to look to themselves, lest, failing under the testing they might undergo, it should turn out that they were only professors, and he should, as to them, have laboured in vain, and so lose his full reward. Not indeed that he had any doubt of their reality, as verses 1-4 show, only he would have them fully sensible of the dangers by which they were encompassed,

And it is to be much observed, that false doctrine, and false doctrine concerning the person of Christ, is the special snare he has in view. "Whoever goes forward,* and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God." The meaning of the words "goes forward" has been well said to be development. That is, starting from the scriptural teaching of the person of Christ, and reasoning from the truth, new thoughts or inferences are developed and presented in the attractive guise of profounder insight and of a more exalted spirituality, so that unwary souls are readily entangled. John meets the snare by saying that whoever does this "hath not God"; and that, on the other hand, he that ABIDETII in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. To maintain the truth therefore will be to incur the charge of not "going forward"; but what a recompense lies in adhering to the teaching of the Christ-"he hath both the Father and the Son"! Well for us is it that the Lord in His tender care has given such plain and weighty instructions-instructions which can be understood even by the feeblest.

Verse 9 is the foundation of the following exhortation, in which the apostle sets forth what our attitude should be towards false teachers on this subject. It is clear that preachers abounded at this period; and on this account it was necessary to put the saints on their guard. If they brought the truth, if servants of Christ and doing His work, the saints were responsible to receive them and their testimony; "If," however, John says, "there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine (the doctrine of the Christ), receive him not

^{*} This is the generally preferred reading.

into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." In such a case there must be no compromise whatever, no consideration for personal character, or for an outwardly blameless walk, which might be associated with a false teacher; nor must there be any hesitation in action. Once it became evident that the teacher did not bring the true doctrine (however alluring his own might be to the natural mind), he must be instantly refused; nor must he be entertained in the saints' houses, or receive even the ordinary courtesies of salutation. For to "greet him" (this is the significance of the word rendered "God speed") would be moral identification with the false teacher, and a becoming "partaker of his evil deeds." Surely this instruction has been almost entirely ignored in the church of God, to her own bitter and sorrowful loss!

The apostle had many things to write; but he forbore for the present, as he trusted soon to see his correspondent, and to speak face to face: "that," he added, as showing how he prized fellowship in the spirit, "our joy may be full." Having put the elect lady on her guard "against all that is equivocal with respect to the person of Christ," he had delivered the message with which he had been entrusted. He therefore concludes his letter with the words, "The children of thy elect sister greet thee."* Who these were, or who the elect lady was, (vv. 1 and 13), has not been revealed. It is to the truth communicated, rather than to the persons, that our attention is directed. May we receive grace to lay it to heart.

^{*} The "Amen" is probably an ecclesiastical addition.

"PART WITH ME."

Јони кій. 8.

THE subject before us this evening is "Part with me." It is not that I seek to get to the extent of it, but to know the beginning of it. We have considered "Christ formed in you"-"not I, but Christ liveth in me"-and the more you enter into the reality of this, the more you necessarily know that you are in a new range of thoughts, tastes, interests, everything. Here Christ is going away, and He says to His disciples, Unless I wash your feet, passing through this world of defilement, you will not have part with me. If you look at the history of grace in John it is very interesting. because you get Christ living in you morally. When you come to "I know my sheep, and am known of mine." there is now an intimacy subsisting between Christ and His own of the same character, I do not say measure, as that between the Father and the Son. That is where grace ends with relation to us. If you have not this intimacy, you cannot know a shade of reserve. Are defilements necessary in passing through the

Are defilements necessary in passing through the world?

Because of our natural susceptibility they are unavoidable. A very small thing will divert you from the Lord. You have entered on His line of things. It is not your duties, or business. The very air you breathe is not a help to you.

Is it moral darkness that we come in contact with?

Yes. You are often not aware how the defilement occurred. He knows; He washes your feet. It is

plain to any one who knows that Christ lives in him that then you like to be in the range of His ways and pleasure.

It would not be possible to have part with Him unless He washed our feet?

No; not possible.

earth.

Do you mean by part with Him intimacy with Him where He is?

Exactly; and I propose to touch the first step in it. One might say, Why not have the wilderness first? Because I believe you are better prepared to understand the wilderness path if you know what Christ is to you. I have before me now the book of Hebrews, first, that you have part with Christ touching the infirmities which press on you while here; and, secondly, part with Him as to His place in the assembly on the

Is it that which makes this scene a wilderness?

The teaching of Hebrews is, that Christ, the Person,

who is not here, is so necessary to you that you are drawn away from this place unto Him, and the consequence is that Christ endears Himself so much to you that you run to Him—that is the race. It is not the place in Hebrews, but the Person—I run to Him. How does He bear you above the pressure here? By His sympathy. How do I find Him here on earth? In the assembly. The two lines are outside of man. I do not say outside of the world. I am only

touching upon "Part with me."

Do you mean you must be outside man to have part with Him? Yes.

Where shall I get sympathy from Him?

Where is He? Not here.

Very well, you must go to Him where He is. There is a great deal in that. He is not only an Advocate, but our Priest. A priest is to maintain you with God. Christendom has placed the priest between the congregation and God. You want to know that Christ would so maintain you above the pressure of circumstances, that you can come boldly to the throne of grace. Let us look at Hebrews ii. The first point is, that "both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren." Now follow up the subject we had last evening - He lives in me. Therefore you are of another order of being. "He is not ashamed to call them brethren." If you do not start there you cannot know sympathy. The general thought about sympathy is that the Lord will shew you consideration. "He stayeth His rough wind in the day of the east wind." That is not sympathy. The sympathy in Hebrews is, that Christ is out of the pressure, and if you are with Him who is out of it, you are borne above it; but if you part company with Him you are under the pressure again. While you are with Him He so absorbs your heart that you are above the pressure.

Is that by associating you with Himself where He is?

Yes; in His company you are borne above the pressure.

Does He not reach down His hand to me?

He draws you to Himself; He brings you into association with Himself; He is ministering to one of His brethren.

Is the sympathy of Christ the same as His support?

It becomes support because you are with Him.

Mary of Bethany gives you a good idea of it. Martha got relief from the pressure, but no sympathy. Mary discovered during that walk with the Lord more than she knew before. While she was mourning for the loss of Lazarus, she found out that she had a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother, and I believe that He so endeared Himself to her then that when she heard He was going to die she anointed Him. What was anything to her if He died? "Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her." I am not sure that it is in terms preached. It is not only that Christ loves the sinner, but He makes the sinner love Him.

In addition to His support you have One who can enter into your pressure. "In all their affliction He was afflicted." You know He feels with you, but He is out of it, and He so soothes you by His company that you are more occupied with your gain in Him than with your bereavement. With Him you are borne above it, and you can come boldly to the throne of grace to obtain mercy and find grace. Paul and Silas are a good example. They were in suffering, but they were most wonderfully supported above it. They were borne above it first, then mercy was vouchsafed. There was a great earthquake, and every one's bands were loosed.

That is, He changes us morally?

Exactly. But it is by Himself. If you expect sympathy, you don't look for anything else. This is because you know the solace He can be to you.

When I lose the support and sympathy, how am I restored?

By finding Him again. One great difficulty in dealing with divine things is, that some put a human interpretation on the word of God. They call kindness and consideration sympathy.

Do I understand that you are using Hebrews to lead up to what "part with me" is in John?

I am using it as the first step. There are two steps scripturally concurrent. I am relieved of the pressure by being in company with Christ, and I find Him in His place here, that is, the assembly.

Do you come to the throne of grace because you have got sympathy or to get it?

Because you have got it. You are not distracted. There are three kinds of pressure—(1) circumstances, (2) bad health, and (3) bereavement. If you are so overwhelmed by pressure that you cannot pray, you cannot enjoy your place in the assembly.

You will be occupied with your pressure?

Quite so. I believe the great practical difficulty is to come to Christ's side.

That is the object of Hebrews?

Yes, you see the teaching most popular is that which sets forth Christ as He was down here; but the moment you press that you are to join Him where He is; people say, "Oh! that is too high."

But it is Christianity.

It is where Christianity is known.

Do I ever get to His side until I have known Him with me?

Certainly not; but you have come to that if you can say, "Not I, but Christ liveth in me." Isaac has His right place. You cannot have sympathy unless you are of His brethren—unless you are in His company.

Then "all of one" you take to be of one stock?

Exactly. But if you add a noun to it you limit it.

Do you take this to be an advance upon the other?

I take it to be the fruition of the other—the very first step of one who knows that Christ is formed in him. I am presenting how you are really drawn away from this place by knowing all Christ will be to you where He is.

Strictly, the saint in John is not a wilderness man at all. True, he has a power outside of it; but as to position, we are in the wilderness. In Hebrews you don't get to heaven; but Christ, who is not here, is indispensable to you. If you get with Him when under pressure, He so absorbs you that for the time you are borne above the pressure.

Would you say that is the intention of the pressure? Sometimes it may be sent for that very purpose.

When we speak of the Lord coming to us in our circumstances—"I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee"—we are in wilderness circumstances.

Yes. You are to be content with such things as ye have. That is wilderness circumstances.

Then the other side is that we are out of wilderness circumstances when we have part with Him where He is.

I know nothing more difficult than to take our proper place in the wilderness, because the wilderness is Marah. How do you get out of Egypt? Through death. What do you get then? Experimental death. That is Marah. I don't mean practical death, I mean moral death. You are not out of the wilderness yet.

The 3rd of John brings us to the end of the wilderness, does it not?

210

You come out in a new way before you leave it.

Well, I hope now that we all understand sympathy.

You cannot know Christ as Priest unless you have known Him as your Saviour first—your salvation must be a settled thing.

That is, the priest's work is not in connection with sins?

Yes; not with sins, it is with respect to infirmity. Infirmity may degenerate into sin, but it is not the same thing.

But He makes propitiation?

He now maintains you in the virtue of all He has effected. "This He did once, when He offered up Himself." The testament is of no force while the testator liveth.

If I bring myself under pressure through sin, do I get sympathy?

You must first come to the Advocate. You must judge yourself. If you do not judge yourself God judges you. A great deal of discipline is because a man has not judged himself for sin, and God is judging him for it. "Our God is a consuming fire."

What are infirmities generally?

There are three kinds. Pressure of circumstances. A man might be too rich, or too poor. He might suffer from ill health, a very great pressure like a ship water-logged. Then there is bereavement, the greatest of all, because there is no repairing it. It is that which makes it such a terrible thing.

Then the present state in which we are is one of weakness?

We are liable to these things, and in ourselves we have no resource. The disciples immediately turned

to the Lord to remove the storm, and He did remove it. But if you want His sympathy you say, No, I come to the Lord, and He will bear me up to where He is Himself. It is a wonderfully practical question, how far we have got to that. It is not only that He bears you above the circumstances, but He is a great Priest over the house of God, and He maintains you in the place where He is, in the holiest of all.

There could not be much complaining if He were known in this way?

You must begin where we were last night—with Christ living in you. Suppose to-morrow you find you are under pressure, and you say, How can I be maintained with God under this pressure? If Christ is your life, if Christ lives in you, you have part with Him—you get sympathy—you are borne above the pressure.

Is it not a great hindrance to getting sympathy that we have unbroken wills?

Oh! Then Christ is not living in you—your old man is not crucified.

Do you want us to learn that it is better to be in pressure than to be relieved of it?

I do. If you are relieved, this place is more attractive. If you get sympathy, Christ is endeared to you; and instead of looking for anything in this place you are drawn to Christ, who is not here—He becomes more and more indispensable to you. In Paul you get infirmity of the highest order; and yet he says, I count it all joy.

The disciples lost something by awakening the Lord to calm the storm.

Of course. I have often asked the Lord to remove

212

a storm, but I should have known Him better if it had remained.

Still, it is better to turn to the Lord in that way than not at all?

Oh, ves! but it is for relief. I think the Lord does

sometimes vouchsafe relief to young believers to encourage them. Mr. Wigram used to say, if he wanted a thing done in a hurry he would ask a young believer to pray for it. . . . Now we come to another thing. I am trying to trace our course historically. The first step is that He bears you above the pressure, and you are so undistracted that you pray, But that is not all. He is a great High Priest over the house of God. Now we come to the step which every true heart would like to know. You would like to know where the Lord will be found on earth. A great deal of the weakness of souls is because they have not taken this step. I do not say that they have not sought fellowship, but they have not come to where the Lord is. "Disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, precious." First, you know Him as bearing you above the pressure here; next you join Him in His place on earth,

You cannot know Him in the second place if you do not in the first?

I agree, I do not think you can. The first is with reference to the pressure here, the second is the only place for the heart. If you know the first you will not stop there. Both are outside of man. The Lord came to His disciples on the water. Peter from affection says, "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. And He said, Come." I do not put it before the young believer (but he has not "part" with Christ if he has not taken that step), but I put before him the

affection which would join the Lord where He is. You cannot join Him except outside of man—where there is nothing for man at all. To walk on water was no path for a man. Nothing save affection can induce you to take this step; it is the only true way to enter the assembly.

I must expect to find Him in an outside place?
Exactly. It is in that connection in Matthew xiv.
John the Baptist is beheaded.

You say this is the true way to enter the assembly?

If you have tasted that the Lord is gracious you are converted. Now there is another step—"To whom coming."

"To whom coming," then, is not a sinner coming to Christ?

No. "To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, precious." You must come to Him outside of man. You say, Oh, I came to the room. What did you find? Well, there was a very poor meeting. You do not know what the step is. It was not the Lord you went to. I believe when you are gathered to the person of Christ you get more from His presence than from the nicest speaking. Thus in 2 Cor. iii. "Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord," we "are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." You are transformed. This is morally the same to the Gentile as Hebrews x. is to the Jew—the holiest of all.

But you would not have us insensible to the bad condition that produces a bad meeting?

No. On the contrary, we have known instances of saints who were not able to hear, being conscious

of the Lord's presence. And they could tell you whether it was a good meeting or a bad one.

If they are near the Lord, they know where He is?

Exactly. I think Christians are not set, for joining the Lord outside of man. I say, the difference between me and Peter is that I have the power and Peter had the affection. Peter had not the power, but everyone who has the Holy Ghost has the power. But you have not used your power. Still, it is a great thing to know where the Lord is.

If Christ lives in me, shall not I necessarily find out where Christ is on earth?

Of course, but you will find that you are borne above the pressure before you can find Him in His place, which is the assembly.

Do you say it is only in the assembly that a soul can behold the glory of the Lord?

Not exactly. I believe an individual can behold the Lord's glory, but it would only affect him in his individual path; but in the assembly he beholds the Lord's glory in relation to His own affairs. Some say, I had the Lord with me at home. No doubt; but He was only in relation to yourself. He is helping you. No doubt, you need it. But if you come into the assembly, it is like the Queen of Sheba coming to Solomon. She got into his house and into his circle.

Might a parson find this out without learning that

Might a person find this out without learning that he is a member of the body?

I think he might. I do not think there is anything here about the unity of the body. There was nothing about it in Acts ii. It had not been revealed. The

Lord has got a place upon earth—it is really His house. The first thing a truly converted soul thinks about is—Where shall I worship? You get it in Exodus xv. It necessarily follows that if you are relieved of judgment, you want to know—has God got a place here?

I was going to ask how would you connect the "beholding the Lord's glory" with the priesthood of Christ?

Where did Aaron and his sons go when they were consecrated?

Into the Holy Place.

Very well. Then if there is no vail, where are they?
In the Holiest.

Very well, that is where you are. The Holiest is the glory of the Lord. To a Gentile it is beholding the Lord's glory. To a Jew it is, that a Man has met all that was typified by the ark. The anti-type is Christ Himself.

Why is it Son over His own house, and great priest over the house of God?

Because one is His right—Son over God's house.

In a word, What do we learn from the high priest over the house of God in Hebrews x.?

That not only you come into the presence of Himself

in glory, but He maintains you there. Aaron's sons went in with him. You come into the Holiest so that you find Him in His glory. You have not yet come to the Father, but to the place where the Father is. You cannot come to the Father unless you come to the place where He is.

But you do not get inside in Hebrews?

You get the right to go in. It is not going in and

out at all. I do not say you may not soil your feet and lose it.

Then "Let us draw near" is once for all a

Once for all. We have always the right to go in, but if you soil your feet you have to judge yourself. There is no new consecration. Practically speaking at the Lord's supper we are remembering the preliminary to consecration. The consecration did not take place until all the offerings had been offered up. Hebrews ii. takes you up at the twenty-second verse of Psalm xxii., but the first twenty-one verses must have been fulfilled. Is responsibility connected with "to whom coming"?

It is calling more than responsibility. I would not press the Lord's supper on a young believer; but I should say, Would you like to join the Lord? Would you like to be where the Lord is? Yes. Well, the Lord is outside of man. The truer a heart is the less will anything satisfy it, except His presence.

Would the effect then be that the assembly would become our absorbing interest here?

Certainly you are brought into His interests. Hence the Holy Ghost is known to you in a different way from what He is in John iv. and vii. He is first for yourself. In John xiv. He is called "the Comforter," because He takes the place of Christ; but if you do not take the place of a servant, you do not know the Comforter.

All this supposes that the will is not at work.

Of course we start with "I am crucified with Christ." You must keep Galatians ii. 20 in your mind.

This is all leading up to "part with me" in John? It is the beginning of it. What we arrive at eventually is that He is Head over everything, and you are united to Him.

We are only at the beginning now.

May I ask what the ship was?

but affection for Christ.

It was what suited water. The Jewish system if you like. You are outside of what suits man. Nothing has enfeebled us so much as what people call joining the brethren—not understanding the ground of the assembly. I put before a young believer nothing

You do not expect him to see that the Lord is in one place and nowhere else?

No, I do not. I want him to join the Lord. You get an illustration of it in the young birds in the autumn. The parent birds want their young ones to know that they can fly. They go about two feet above them, and the young ones try to get to the parents, and then they find they can fly.

I believe many a Christian, if he really wanted to join the Lord, would find out he had wings—the power.

J. B. S.

A READING.

Matthew xi. 25-30; xiii. 44-46.

You notice the Scripture I read opens with the words "At that time." We are introduced to an utterance of the Lord Jesus Christ to His Father.

It was a special moment. Even John the Baptist began to doubt; and he sent his disciples, saying, "Art thou He that should come, or do we look for another?" He had been told that the One upon whom he should see the Spirit descending and abiding was He, and he "saw and bare record that" Jesus "was the Son of God." What could have made the difference in

world, and that in spite of all the good He did in the world. The Lord Jesus came, as it were, piping the

news of grace, and they heard it not; people did not believe Him. A few fishermen of Galilee believed on Him, but none of the leaders. Do they receive Him now? Not at all. Don't you think He felt it when He was here? Ah, He did feel it, and He feels it still, and He is conscious of it. The Lord Jesus Christ did not go amongst the ranks of angels to find companions, but He came amongst men in the streets and lanes of the city. The Lord wanted saved sinners to be His companions in eternal glory. Are you answering to His mind? Do you know what it is to be walking in company with a Christ that the world will not have? We can give joy to His heart by being true to Him. People may be very grateful to the Lord for what He did for them, without being near Him. The Father loves to teach us about His own Blessed Son. Do you know how precious Christ is to the Father, and what it must have been to God to see His Son rejected on the earth? The Son turns to the Father at that time of His rejection, and thanks Him that whilst the wise of this world did not receive His things, He had revealed

them unto babes who did not know the ways of the world. I have been converted for fifty years, and I know of nothing more blessed than to take all my blessings from the hand of my precious Saviour. It was to the babes that the Father revealed the preciousness of Christ; not to those who care for what is going on in this world to-day. He says to them, I will tell you what I think of my dear Son. Men rejected

Him, but the Father so loved Him that He put everything into His hands; and when He puts any thing into the hands of His Son, He will never let it drop; and He has put you into His hands, and He will not let you drop either. If the Lord Jesus Christ spoke words of grace to any poor sinner on earth, it was as One who knew all the love of the Father's heart. I want to engage your hearts with two things; on the one hand the world rejecting Christ, and on the other that solitary Man, the Object of the Father's love, He who could tell all the secrets of that love, and yet was rejected. Now He turns round and says, "Come unto Me." I want this test for those who do know their sins forgiven. Have you ever come to Christ as the Object of the Father's love outside the world? He stood outside it all and said, "Come unto Me." There are numbers of Christians who know the work of Christ, are clear of judgment, and have a title to heaven, but they have not found the company of Christ outside the world. I believe there is many a weary and heavy-laden saint who has not the sense of having everything in Christ outside the world. The "rest" is to be found in His company. When God made this universe, what do you think He made it for? He made it that He might have His own delight in the work of His hands for His glory, and He is going to have a company of poor sinners, saved and made like to Christ, in whom He will have His own eternal delights.

God wanted Himself to be known by His creatures, that they might be acquainted with Him. How? His own Blessed Son came down to make Him known. Then He took up men, saved them, and became their

life, their righteousness; and all created intelligences will see, in Christ, and in the saints in the likeness of Christ, what a blessed God He is. I wish you to get into the company of Christ so that you may know you are part of that company, the church, in whom all the lineaments of Christ are to shine out to the glory of God for ever. I will give you an illustration. In the morning you may see the countless drops of dew upon the grass, and each dewdrop is like a little sun. It is nothing but a drop of water, but it reflects the sun. So will it be with the saints—each will be a reflection of Christ. Every believer is nothing but a little particle himself, but all will be like Christ. What will that be for God to look at? If you look at the New Jerusalem in Rev. xxi., there is nobody seen in it. It is the dwellingplace of the glory of God and of the Lamb; and they dwell in it. The New Jerusalem is the saints. It is all Christ, but Christ shining in the saints, the metropolis of glory, and God dwells there.

I may be only a little bit of the jasper wall, so to speak, but it is all one crystal vessel lighted up with the glory of God. I want you to see what God is making: a dwelling-place where He will rest for ever and ever. The evangelist goes and finds a poor sinner, one that Christ will put into that heavenly city, and a pastor or teacher builds that soul up in Christ, that all that is of Christ may be formed in that soul. How is that done? All the teaching in the world would not do it of itself. If by God's power I am able to put your soul in contact with Christ so that you get near Him, it will make your face shine. You cannot get into the company of Christ without being formed into His mind. You will find in His company He is everything to you.

I want to commend Christ to you so that you may want His company, and so that you may be separated from the world, which can only debase us.

If you get into the company of that blessed Christ, His company will form you. I want the feeblest believers to have the sense that Christ is everything to them. You find all you want in Christ, and you cannot get it anywhere but there. That lowly, rejected Man stood outside this world with only a few poor disciples and said, "Come unto Me." If you get into the company of Christ you will get into contact with all the world of glory, even while you are here.

Read 2 Cor. v. 1-5: "For we know that if our

earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. . . . Now He that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God." These verses shew what God has wrought us for. All that is of Christ in your heart the Spirit of God has written there, and it is all in accord with heaven. All that is wrought of Christ in you belongs to heaven, and soon He will take us there in bodies which are heavenly. The power for forming your body for heaven all comes from heaven, and God wants you to know Christ now as life, and righteousness, and all else.

The Son of God takes you in all your emptiness, and fills you so that you may be entering into all the joy of heaven now. He is going to have you in His own likeness, and He wants you for His own joy now; but for that you must answer to His mind. Christ found a treasure in the world, and you, as saints, are part of it. He gave up all that He had to possess you. He bought you. What is Christ's treasure in this world?

Are you a part of it? Do you believe you are very precious to Him? When He took you up as a poor, lost sinner it was not for what you were, but for what He could make you.

God took a handful of dust to make a wonderful being—man: and he goes back to a handful of dust! God is going to make a wonderful thing in glory, and He takes up a poor degraded sinner to make him an heir of glory, something suited to Himself.

It is all hidden now, but I know that Christ is written on your heart, dear believer, and Christ's thought is to build up in your soul all that is of Himself, so that you may say there is no place like His company. I want your heart to understand that you are His treasure. The Spirit of God devotes Himself to the graving of Christ in your heart.

The pearl is one; it is to shew the unity of the thing.

Every colour in the various flowers is a ray of the sun, just a reflection of the light in the sun, but it takes all the colours of the various flowers to shew it out, and so it will take all the saints in glory to shew out the beauties of Christ, but all are one. The Church is one. Christ bought the pearl because He saw His own beauty in it, and He will shew out His own beauty and glory for ever in that scene of eternal delights. May we each one seek to answer to the heart of Christ! If you come to Christ you will find yourself in the company of those who have that same Blessed Person before them. Have you found that Blessed One who is outside all that is in this world? That Blessed Christ! Do you know Himself, and is your heart connected with all that world of glory? May something more of Christ be found in your hearts, and may you know that you are part of His treasure here for His name's sake. T. H. R.

SCRIPTURE NOTES.

T.

Јони v. 21, 26.

A GREAT difference, we apprehend, is to be found between these two verses. In reply to the persecution of the Jews, the Lord asserted His sovereign co-equality with the Father (v. 17), and on this drawing forth their further enmity. He declared His entire and perfect communion with the Father, and the Father's intimate and perfect communion with Himself, adding, moreover, His sovereign right, exercised in this mutual communion, to quicken whom He would, even as the Father raised up the dead and quickened them. "Here we have," as another has said, "the first proof of His divine rights. He gives life, and He gives it to whom He will." But when we come to verse 26, while the glory of His person is equally manifested, the Son, become incarnate, is seen in another way. Our attention is now directed to the mediatorial character of life, rather than to life-giving power, sovereignly flowing forth from a divine Person. Hence it is that, after the solemn announcement, "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live," the Lord says, "For as the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given the Son to have life in Himself." characteristic of this gospel, that, while the glory of the eternal Son-of the Word that was with God and that was God-and His oneness and equality with the Father shine forth in every page, yet He is always seen as receiving everything from the Father. In redemption in that new world which God was forming for the glory of His beloved Son, where eternal life will be in full display and enjoyment, the Father is the fount and source, and the Son become man is the medium or channel, in virtue of His death and resurrection, of all the blessings of the redeemed. He thus says, in John xvii., "The glory which Thou gavest me I have given them." For this end it was necessary that the corn of wheat should fall into the ground and die; but having died, and received all from the Father, He shares all He receives with His people!

"Yet it must be. Thy love had not its rest
Were Thy redeemed not with Thee fully blest.
That love that gives not us the world, but shares
All it possesses with its loved co-heirs."

THE SOUL'S RESPONSE.

LORD JESUS, Thou hast swept our souls With living touches o'er, Till all our being now responds To praise Thee and adore. Life, flowing with resistless force Through all our mortal frame. Springs up to Thee, exhaustless Source, From whence the life-stream came. And when the music of Thy love Breaks forth in fount-like strain. Our souls leap up, as leaps the hart O'er mountain and o'er plain, Till every chord and every string Vibrates within our souls, And, like a river's onward sweep, The voiceless anthem rolls. And thus 'twill be, till we ascend To where the heart of God Shall strike in deepest melodies The eternal, ceaseless chord.

M. B. B.

THE ROADS TO GAZA AND DAMASCUS.

THE roads southward and northward from Jerusalem were the scenes of the remarkable incidents recorded in Acts viii. 26-ix. 8. These were the blessing of Candace's treasurer through Philip's preaching to him Jesus, and the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. Both these were exalted men in their own circles, and most interesting it is to trace the activity of God's grace toward them, bringing them into a sense of their own nothingness and of the glory of Christ, so that nothing remained to them as an object but that blessed One, and no path upon earth but His own. Let us trace this a little in detail

We begin with the man of Ethiopia, who was of great authority in the land from whence he came, and had charge of all the treasure of his sovereign lady. Yet, whatever his greatness, his heart was not satisfied within that circle, and he had come as a worshipper to Jerusalem. The glory of Jehovah's temple there, toward whose name he had desires, had attracted him from this great distance. Yet it was the very house of which the Lord had solemnly testified, "Ye have made it a den of thieves." God's thought concerning it certainly was, that it should be a house of prayer for all nations, where even the Ethiopian might stretch out his hands to God; but in the hands of His people it had become a place of robbery and spoil. How then could the

heart that truly sought Jehovah be satisfied there?

The Lord met him not amid the splendour of the house at Jerusalem, doomed to judgment. He was

returning, and in his chariot, as an unsatisfied seeker, he read the prophet Isaiah, yet understood not what he read, for there was none to guide him. There on the desert road that led to Gaza he read, in the glowing language of the prophet, of One in whom had shone unparalleled moral beauty in the very midst of treachery and wickedness. Those who had filled God's house with corruption had arisen with violence against the One who was perfectly meek, and yet He resisted them not. "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened He not His mouth."

This moral beauty of surpassing greatness had been displayed upon earth. Where was it now? It was gone; for, as he read further, "His life is taken from the earth." As a vision of perfect sweetness it had appeared, the very darkness enhancing the brilliancy of the light; but the violence was triumphant, and He was gone.

So read this Ethiopian as he returned from Jerusalem, and doubtless was affected by what he read; yet he understood it not. But the eye of the Lord was upon him, and He sent with haste after him the evangelist Philip, who, when seated in his chariot, began at the same scripture, and preached to him Jesus. He began at the point which had riveted the attention of the lonely reader, that moral beauty had shone in Jesus in the midst of the greatest corruption and violence upon earth, but He was gone. There he began, but doubtless went on to unfold something of what was involved in His death and consequent glory at God's right hand.

It is sweet to see what was the effect upon the listener to that wondrous tale. The point at which it

upon his soul, "His life is taken from the earth." "See, here is water," he exclaimed; "what doth hinder

me to be baptized?" If the One who had gained his heart was gone from the earth, he would henceforth abide under the shadow of His death in this world.

He was baptized, the instrument used to his blessing was caught away, and he was left alone in the joy of his newly-found object, and in the path of following Him as the rejected one from the earth.

The circle of Saul was a very different one from that of the Ethiopian. Natural to him was all that which had attracted the other from his own country and all its treasures. He himself tells us that he profited beyond his contemporaries in the Jews' religion. (Gal. i.)

We find him here (Acts ix.) in the most eminent instance of his zeal for that religion. Not content with the havoc wrought among believers in the Lord Jesus in the land of Judea, he persecuted them "even unto strange cities." His authority and commission proceeded from the high priest, the chief priests, and the whole estate of the elders. His zeal was so unbounded that he permitted himself no noontide repose. While the sun was in its greatest strength he pushed on his way, and had come very near to his desired end. We see him in the pride of his greatness, when suddenly

he is struck to the ground by a light surpassing the brilliant orb of day. A blinded man by the glory of that light, he is led by the hand into the city, which he had designed to enter as a vehement persecutor. Here was a complete collapse! For three days and nights he neither ate nor drank; and at the close of that time was spoken of by the Lord as a praying man

—one in the confession of perfect weakness waiting in dependence upon God. How was this marvellous change wrought?

He had himself been the most emphatic expression

of the violence of which the Ethiopian read. All the vehemence of his soul was against the name of Jesus. What was his surprise and consternation when addressed personally by Him from that excellent glory! It sufficed for the Ethiopian to read of His moral glory, and to know of whom the prophet spake; but for a heart hardened by traditional religion there was needed this overwhelming testimony to what the lowly sufferer of Calvary was in God's account. But if such was needed (blessed be the God of all grace!) it was given. "I am Jesus" was spoken by the glorified One in the ears of that stricken man.

It was effective. He was brought, as one perfectly humbled, to dependence upon God. Then, by the hand of the pious disciple Ananias, he received sight and the Holy Ghost, thus being linked with the One whom he had seen in glory. From that moment He was the sole object of his heart, and "the fellowship of His sufferings" was his only path on earth.

Thus we see the death of the Lord as the prominent feature in the former of these instances, and His glory as that of the latter. Yet there is perfect consonance. If all that moral glory which was the delight of God found no response with man, and only awakened his hatred and rejection, it was fitting that He in whom it was displayed should find His place at God's right hand. And the one who believes on Him confesses the fitness, and is formed by all that is seen in Him. If IIE has died, who by His lowly grace attracts the

place which it can regard as home. All is over in respect to man and the world. And as He is enthroned in glory, so does He become the commanding object of the soul that loves Him, and all its resources are found in Him where He is. It could not be content to find a single thing outside His fulness.

May God in His rich grace form our souls in the distinct sense of what is involved in the death and glory of Christ. J. R.

THE SERVANT OF GOD IN A DAY OF FAILURE. HIS DEVOTION, SEPARATION, IMITATION, AND

PRESERVATION

epistle, and hence our understanding and accepting

THOUGHTS ON 2 TIMOTHY. THESE four come before us very distinctly in this

them are most helpful to us as the Lord's servants. This understanding will prevent disappointment. The most important thing in any service is the furnishing and fitting of the servant. This is treated of from chapter i. 1 to ii. 19. The servant must be first formed for his service, and in this section the paramount requirement, the sine qua non, is before us. He is to be devoted-devotion is to characterise him. Devotion is here manifested in three ways, and

these will come out more or less in every believer today who is like-minded with Timothy; for though we are not Timothys, no one will deny that we ought to possess and manifest, in these perhaps darker days, that which characterized the true servant at the close of the apostolic days. The ways in which devotion manifests itself in the servant are: 1. Antagonism to the ruler of

this present scene, and seeking to deliver poor blinded souls who accept his sway; that is, he is a soldier. 2. Contending as an athlete to win the prize; *i.e.*, he is a racer. 3. Being wholly occupied with hard work—labouring, and not eating of the fruits; *i.e.*, he is a

husbandman. Each of these three exhibits devotion,

and each of them requires it.

In the first, he is not only to be in antagonism to the enemy, but he is not to be cntangled with things here. He thus is held ready to present himself at any point, and at any moment at which an enemy may appear. In the second he is striving as an athlete, and has entered the lists with two things before him. One is that he shall strive according to the rules of the games, or lawfully; the other is that he may be crowned at their termination, and not merely come in on a level with others. Those who strive lawfully will be crowned. In the third, to labour and not to rest is his work now. The reaping time is to come, when he shall partake of the fruits. He has devoted himself to soldier work, to racing, and to a life of ceaseless toil in the field, with many, many obstacles to each. He is just content to have it so. All is

divinely settled.

After devotion to our work, which is (in all of us) an individual matter, comes the responsibility of a servant in the midst of servants, that is, his attitude in the house. This is Separation. One finds himself in the midst of many vessels in the house, "some to honour, and some to dishonour"; for these vessels form the state of things in which our lot is cast.

Separation is the second mark of the faithful servant

chapter iii. 7. He finds himself a poor solitary vessel in the house, but one only desiring to be there "fit for the Master's use." In order to this desirable result he must purge himself from the "vessels to dishonour." Only such purged vessels are agreeable to

Him. "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work. Two reasons are before us which demand that the servant shall act in separation. One is obedience to

the word, the other is to keep a clear conscience. Devotion calls for separation. This is not isolation. No. Having acted thus, he does not find himself alone. He finds that others have acted similarly, and he is directed not to walk in isolation, but to walk with them. "Follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart."

Now comes in chapter iii. 8-13 our third point, Imitation. What is right Satan always imitates with one desire-to spoil it. In one way, to find that such a thing as an Imitation exists, is a cheer to a true servant, because it proves that there is a right and real thing somewhere. Jannes and Jambres imitated what Moses had done. The action of the Lord's servant

was wrought by the power of God. The imitation is by power also, but it is the power of the enemy. Six verses give this to us-from eight to thirteen. Now I think it is a great help when things happen in this way that you know all about them before they come. You really expect them, and you are furnished by this scripture with directions for your own conduct in the midst of them. These directions are twofold: we continue in the doctrine learnt from Paul, and also cleave very closely to the Holy Scriptures. (Verses 14 to 17.) We are struck by the simplicity of this pro-

vision. In it lies the antidote, when the poison of Imitation is abroad. It is God's grand preservative for every servant of His to-day. But there is an addition to it which is most important also. It is found in chapter iv., 1-5, viz., active employment in what is good. The servant is not only preserved himself by what we have already quoted, he is also active in the work of the Master. He must "preach the word" and "do the work of an evangelist." We have thus his internal and his external, and both are necessary, in the midst of a scene such as we are in to-day, wherein are found professors of the truth, imitators of it, and open enemies to it. The one who is thus serving in simplicity and devotion does not imitate others; and though fully conscious that imitation exists, he is too busily engaged to be occupied with it. He who would help others must keep right himself, and the time is too short for us to stop (save by example and precept) to straighten the crooked. We seek to make straight paths for our feet, and simple obedience finds that these are then "ready-made."

Lastly, we come to our fourth point, Preservation. It must be admitted—however dark the scene in the world, and whatever the confusion of the church—that God is calmly having His own way in what goes on. There is no contradiction in God's sovereignty and man's responsibility. Both are fully admitted; but it is a cheer to the heart to look calmly to His side of things. Whether in the world,

in the assembly, or in the individual servant, we can trace His handiwork. This comes out fully in the concluding part of this epistle. The Roman Emperor, the assembly of God, His servant Paul, are all here under review, and all work for the "preservation" of His poor imprisoned servant. Through all, come what may,

Paul will be preserved, and so will Timothy, and so

will all who are likeminded. Even a cruel death may come, but that does not touch the preservation of the faithful servant. This section is in chapter iv. 6-18. The Lord will both deliver and preserve all His servants who tread this path "unto His heavenly kingdom; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." Thank

God for the cheer of this!

His saints.

Many a so-called Christian path to-day presents far more attractions than those which this Second Epistle to Timothy offers. The true servant in Paul's line is not caught by such. Devotion, Separation, and Preservation form the only safe path for us, because of the peculiarity of the day in which we live. No greater attraction to serve the Lord could possibly be presented to faith than the assurance of God's preservation, and this we have before us in this epistle, though perhaps it is only the servant who is walking in faith that will see, or will accept it. May the Lord graciously turn many of His servants into the present enjoyment of the privileges of such a path, and keep in it all who are there for His name's sake, for the individual blessing of each servant, and for the collective blessing of all

H. C. A.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE ASSEMBLY.

1 CORINTHIANS XII.

ONE must not be surprised at the diabolical attempt of the enemy to counterfeit the action of the Holy Ghost at the beginning of this chapter; it could hardly be expected that the adversary would allow the Church of God upon earth to rest in peace.

There are three things that I should like to notice.

- 1. The Sovereignty of the Holy Spirit;
- 2. The baptism into one body; and then we may ask,
- 3. Is it possible to acknowledge these truths in the day in which we are living?

The first blessed truth is clearly taught all through this passage, and the eleventh verse alone would suffice to establish it: "But all these worketh...the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will." It is a great thing to know that the Holy Ghost, a true divine Person, is here upon earth and is acting in a sovereign way, in the distribution of gifts, in the body; that is, in the church.

The Lordship of Christ is insisted upon by the apostle as being the test of the Holy Spirit's manifestation. No one can say "Lord Jesus" but by the Holy Spirit; the enemy, of course, refuses to acknowledge the supremacy of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the test is crucial. The Lordship of Christ is of the very highest importance; for if all Christians were truly subject to Him, there would be no difficulty in receiving the blessed truths in connection with the assembly upon earth.

The Holy Ghost is Sovereign, but does not act in any one member independently of all the others. I suppose that no two gifts are alike, there are diversities of gifts, but one Spirit, and He alone has distributed them. It would be well for us to pay attention to this, and to

the fact of the differences of services, but one Lord; for man cannot make gifts, they are divinely given; and then again the differences of services, and the responsibility of each to the Lord, if understood, would keep us from imitating others, or criticising them. The distinctions of operations, but the same God who operates, should be noted also, for there is a danger of prescribing a certain line of operation which may be according to our thoughts: it is very important to allow full scope

The gifts that are spoken of here have often been noticed, and the Corinthians failed to use them under the Spirit's guidance. They attached more importance to those gifts where supernatural power was wonderfully displayed, than to the higher ones; and, acting as children (as they really were spiritually), they made a wrong use of what had been given for edification.

for divine action.

The point is that there is the sovereign Spirit of God present in the assembly, and that the Corinthians ignored Him in His corporate action. Alas! into what a state things have fallen in Christendom since then. Surely the great sin has been that of ignoring the Holy Ghost's presence, and though in a superstitious way He

^{*} The whole thing is a dire mistake. The Holy Spirit descended on Christ in the form of a dove, and the symbol is comprehensible at once in its beauty. But the Spirit could not descend on men (redeemed though they be) on earth as a dove; nor did He so descend. There was leaven in the two Pentecostal leaves. (Leviticus xxiii. 17.)

236 THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE ASSEMBLY.

no true recognition of His presence exists. The very fact of singing Veni Creator Spiritus!

"Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire, And fill us with celestial fire,"

shews that people do not believe that He is come. No, the Holy Spirit's presence and sovereignty have been ignored, and we need to be brought back to own it.

When His blessed and sovereign action is confessed, and His presence known, then can we enter into the truth of His acting in each member of the body, in view of the profit of the whole body itself. (See vv. 7-12.) Surely we should pray that these immense truths may be received by believers and maintained in the Spirit's power; God would have us to know this power to the exclusion of what is merely of man.

And this brings us to the second part of our subject.

2. The twelfth verse alludes to the Head and members, the Christ;* and then comes the baptism

members, the Christ;* and then comes the baptism by one Spirit into one body.

The first part of the thirteenth verse is of great

The first part of the thirteenth verse is of great interest; for up to the point of having Christ as Head, baptized, as we are, whether Jew or Gentile, into one body, we love our own identity. Of course I am speaking now of our place as members of the body; we have a new Head, it is a grand and unchanging fact. We had nothing to do with this; I mean that it was no act of our own, but the Holy Ghost's act, and we have been formed into one body by it. It is a very blessed thing when believers learn that Christ is their Head, the Head of the one

^{*} I recollect a priest in France saying to me that Christ is the Head of the Church in heaven, and the Pope its head on earth. In such a case you would have a monstrous thing—a body with two heads!

body, and when they see that all true saints have been baptized into it. If there were literally several "bodies," as some seem to believe, there would be several heads; but no, there is one body, and one Head.

The second part of the verse is different: "And have been all made to drink into one Spirit." Many readers know that there is no preposition before "one Spirit," which makes the passage all the more remarkable; it is a question of true spiritual enjoyment and communion, and we need to pray to the Lord that He may give us to know the Spirit's power upon earth in connection with the wonderful truths of the one body. Here the blessed Spirit's action is identified with us, that is, with all the members of the body; in the former part of the verse we are identified with His action. May we know more of what the unity of the Spirit means—though it has been so little known,

3. It will be seen that I have assumed that we can acknowledge these truths even in our day of ruin, and thus have anticipated the answer to the question in the third part of our short study.

or seen, through the dreary pages of Church history!

If we be truly subject to Christ, we shall acknowledge the truths that concern Him and the Church. If all believers in London (or elsewhere) were subject to the Head, they would all be together—a wonderful proof of the Holy Ghost's power, and of the unity of the Spirit. For one moment five thousand Jews were seen in Jerusalem (Acts iv. 32) with one heart and one soul; instead of five thousand ways of thinking, they had but one. Blessed display of the unity of the Spirit!

But it will be said that we are no longer living in Pentecostal times. No, indeed; but to faith these blessed truths are real, and we can be upon the ground of the assembly of God, ardently desiring that all true members may find their way to it.

4. The difference between the fifteenth and following

verses, and the twenty-first and following, has been noticed. In the case of a lesser gift, the possessor of it must not be discouraged in comparing it with a greater one; in the case of a greater, as compared with a lesser, it cannot be said "I have no need of thee!" We are dependent upon one another, nor could the smallest member be missing without the body being incomplete. The hidden members are as necessary as the more conspicuous ones; and I recollect a physician once saying to me, in speaking of exposure to cold, that the face and hands may be exposed to snow, or rain, or cold, but that great care should be taken to cover the chest and other vital organs, the officina of the human body. This very illustration is used here by the apostle, and the twenty-fifth verse is very important.

If there be subjection to Christ as Head, and a true desire to serve Him, and all the members of the body to which each one of us belongs; if, I say, there be this, and the "more excellent way," that is, love in activity, true unselfish service, there may be surely the answering to God's mind as to our place in the assembly in this day of confusion. Though indeed we may feel that the whole body is in a state of partial paralysis as compared with the twenty-sixth verse, yet we may own the great truth of the unity of the Spirit, and so far as possible walk in it.

Paul, by the Holy Ghost, shows the true order of the gifts, and then in what follows speaks of love. May we too be characterized by obedience and love, and thus walk according to God's mind as to the assembly upon earth!

E. L. B.

TWO ASPECTS OF THE MEAT OFFERING. (LEVITICUS ii., and xxiii, 16-21.)

Ir has often been remarked that the meat offering is

of the order of Cain's offering. Of that order, but how different in nature! Cain brought the fruits and flowers of a cursed earth to God, whilst in the meat offering of Leviticus ii. perfect manhood is offered to God in the person of our blessed Lord. Another aspect of the meat offering (that of the Pentecostal loaves) shews us redeemed man presented to God in the power of the Holy Ghost, the leaven in this case being baked

in the loaves. There is no leaven in Leviticus ii.

Let us briefly consider the two aspects of this offering as they are found in the two passages, taking care not to confound them.

In Leviticus ii. our Lord is seen as the perfect Man

—that holy Man of Luke's gospel—born of the Virgin Mary. The fine flour, oil, and incense are the first things to be noticed. The Word became flesh. A real Man was born at Bethlehem by the Holy Ghost's power. One walked upon earth, different from all the sons of Adam, in His blessed person the Second Man, and all His life was full of fragrance to God. All the incense was burned with the memorial in verse 2, and went up in a sweet savour. The offering was most

holy amongst sacrifices burned by fire to Jehovah.

240

In the following part (Leviticus ii. 4-10) it is well to notice the anointing with oil of each portion of the cake. I suppose that the breaking in pieces (verse 6) may represent our blessed Lord's life looked upon in detail; and every action, every word, bore the character of the oil—the blessed, dependent Man of Luke's

gospel. The more we read His life the more do we see its divine beauty. The memorial was burnt on the altar, and the rest of the offering eaten by the priests; and indeed we need, in this (sacerdotal) character, to feed upon the meat offering.

Leaven and honey were excluded from the meat

offering in Luke ii., and it may be well to look at this. Leaven represents evil, and could have no place in the perfect Man. Jesus was absolutely holy. Honey is rather the figure of natural affections, which are good in themselves, but form no part of the offering upon the altar. So our Lord could say to Mary, in John ii., "What have I to do with thee?" We have no doubt as to our Lord's care and love for her from other passages.

There is a danger, let us note in passing, of what

is a caution against using too much "honey." As an illustration, we all recollect the trouble caused by eating too much honey in Xenophon's time, in the retreat of the ten thousand.*

The twelfth verse alludes to the offering at Pentecost,

is merely natural coming into the things of God, and causing trouble; and so, in Proverbs xxv. 16, there

The twelfth verse alludes to the offering at Pentecost as we shall shortly see.

Then the salt of the covenant was not to be wanting in the meat offering. Salt is that peculiar power of * They found a quantity of honey in a village, and partook of it without moderation. It caused great illness in the army.

the Holy Spirit that preserves what is good from corruption. In Christ there was no leaven, but salt was to be found in all His ways and words for the good of others. I should say that His words, "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's," are an example of this. For us we need to be kept by the Spirit's power, so that our inmost thoughts may be for God. This will produce the conservative effect of salt in our walk. Every one

shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt. The difference between the salt and the fire here has often been noticed. May we have salt in ourselves. Salt cannot be restored if once it has lost its savour.* The exhortation in Colossians iv. 6 is very important—the speech to be scasoned with salt. If there be too much, it becomes rather judgment

than seasoning, as in the case of Lot's wife (who must needs look back to see that dear Sodom once more) who became a pillar of salt, receiving in judgment—in her death—that which she had refused during her life. A striking monument.

The last few verses of Leviticus ii. are very blessed, and shew us another way in which the meat offering was presented to God. The full-grained ears of corn are crushed, and the memorial burnt. Notice that in every meat offering the fire has to be gone through, and the accomplishment of this we find in the gospels,

* I recollect hearing an account of the effect of the sun upon parts of the shores of the Dead Sea, where one may find salt which has literally "lost its savour" in places where strong evaporation has taken place. Good for nothing but to be trodden under foot.

where the perfect offering was made. Especially in the one already noticed (Luke) do we find the perfect manhood of our blessed Lord exposed to the fire.

But let us now briefly look at the second aspect of the meat offering: I mean that of Leviticus xxiii. 16, et sea. In the 15th verse seven weeks were counted from that day when the sheaf of firstfruits had been presented, and this presentation no doubt represents our Lord's resurrection. There could be no change as to His person morally, for He is Jesus Christ, the

same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever; but what a change as to condition, on that morning of the resurrection, when Jesus, no longer the man of sorrows, but triumphant over the grave, gave life in abundance to the disciples! The last Adam is a quickening spirit, and so we find, in the sheaf of firstfruits, the figure of the risen Christ. Then, seven weeks afterwards, came the day of

Pentecost, the day on which the Holy Spirit was sent to form the church of God upon earth. The assembly is here represented by the two loaves baked with leaven; there is an adequate testimony to the grace of God by which the redeemed company is presented to Him on the ground of perfect redemption in Christ. No such thing had been known before this, and it has been well said, that before the Holy Spirit came to

dwell in men the dwelling-place must be prepared; and His very presence in the assembly testifies to the perfect work on the cross of Him who rose seven weeks before the day of Pentecost. Blessed are they who understand the true connection between the risen Lord and the favoured company united to Him by the Holy Ghost! It is very important in the present day to see the new order of things brought in by Christ's resurrection, and to know that the Spirit is upon earth, as sent from the glorified Head of the church.

But let us notice that there was leaven in these two

loaves (compare Lev. ii. 12), although it was baked in them. That is to say, there is a very different offering here to that which we considered as the figure of our Lord's perfect humanity; in this one, representing the church, the leaven is found, for there is evil in us.

I think that the passage in Galatians where the flesh is said to lust against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, would help us here; for the meaning of the end of the verse Galatians v. 17 is that we should not do that which naturally, according to the flesh, we should wish. That is, although the flesh be there, the Spirit is superior to it; and we may see this in the loaves presented at Pentecost with the leaven baked in them. Redeemed man is presented to God in the power of the Spirit.

Notice, too, that in the passage before us (Lev. xxiii.

18, 19) burnt offerings and a sin offering accompanied the presentation of the two loaves; that is, nothing can counteract sin but the work of Christ, and this is brought to memory by the goat offered at the Feast of Weeks. (v. 19.)

Hoping that these brief remarks may be useful, I can only say that the blessed subject is most imperfectly considered; perhaps we may look into it further on another occasion, if the Lord will.

E. L. B.

"THE GOD OF PEACE."

SEVERAL times in the epistles reference is made to God as the God of peace, and this title, or expression, is full of blessed meaning to the spiritual mind. The term is however used in different connections, but this only

adds to the importance of this presentation of Himself on God's part, letting us know how He delights to suit Himself to the needs and difficulties of His people, so that by the apprehension of what He is to them, and for them, they may enjoy perfect peace in the midst of tribulation.

We are in a world where sin has marred everything.

and has also brought in its train sorrow, trouble, misery, and death. As connected by nature with this scene we are partakers of these consequences, and not only so, but we have a sense of distance from, and unfitness for, God, and a dread of judgment to come pressing on the conscience. It is as finding ourselves thus that God begins this blessed revelation of Himself to our hearts, not, indeed, in the way of slighting the question of sin, as every true believer well knows, but giving up His own Son to glorify Him about it by His atoning death on the cross. As to sin, God could never be at peace with it, nor rest where it was present; nor could we enjoy peace except by the complete putting of it away from God's sight. Hence we see at the cross (and we shall never forget it through all eternity) God pouring out His wrath upon sin; and we see His own blessed Son entering into those unfathomable depths of sorrow and anguish; as, "alone in that dark hour," He bore the sins of many, enduring the hiding of God's

face, and sustaining His righteous judgment against sin. It was infinite grace that brought Him there, infinite love that gave Him up to suffer, and to die. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." What are the results? Who can ever tell a thousandth part of them? Let us get hold in our souls of this one

God can have man before Him in perfect peace and acceptance (even as Jesus is now before Him as man), and reveal Himself to man as the Fountain of all

grand result which gives character to all, namely, that

blessedness and glory, also that those who are thus brought nigh "in Christ Jesus," and by His blood, are free to drink into this blessedness even now, and shall be eternally satisfied with it. Peace has been made, and now God can present Himself as "the God of peace," so that His people may know Him, and joy in Him, as the One from whom all true peace flows,

and now God can present Himself as "the God of peace," so that His people may know Him, and joy in Him, as the One from whom all true peace flows, who is Himself the Source and Author of it; and we, as brought to Him, can know and enjoy it in proportion as we practically abide in His presence.

We are not now referring only to the enjoyment of peace about the question of sins, though even this, alas! is but poorly and partially understood and known by

many of the Lord's people, so that they are unable to enjoy the wider extent of it as ministered by the Spirit in the epistles. The cause of this defect is, in many cases, because there has not been entire looking outside of, and away from, self. Self-occupation is kept up, and peace is sought through some inward feelings or outward graces. If any such should read this, we would desire to direct their minds to that by which what they seek can alone be realized. We may find a beautiful presentation of it in Heb. xiii. 20-"The God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant," &c. What a region and atmosphere of peace the Spirit of God conducts us to here! Jesus our Lord, the great Shepherd of the sheep (who, as the good Shepherd,

judgment, the wrath) is now raised up ("brought again") from among the dead. But how? By whom? By "the God of peace." Sin, death, judgment left behind for ever, we can truly say—

gave His life for the sheep, endured all the storm, the

"The storm that bowed Thy blessed head
Is hushed for ever now;
And rest divine is ours instead,
Whilst glory crowns Thy brow."
How all this declares to us the attifude, the feel-

ings, the desires of the blessed God now towards every believer in Jesus, towards the feeblest and weakest in that flock of which He is now "the great Shepherd." Yes, dear reader, God lets you know His feelings and desires to you as "the God of peace" (ponder over the expression we prove the expression are prove that the expression are provented to the expression of the expression of the expression are provented to the expression of t

the expression, we pray you) in raising up Jesus our Lord, the great Shepherd of the sheep.

But we must leave this deeply interesting scripture to the meditation of our readers, and now consider briefly other places in the word where this expression

is used in other connections. We find it in an intensified form in 1 Thess. v. 23, where we read, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly," &c. These Thessalonians had learned the meaning of the death and resurrection of Jesus. They knew God as the God of peace who had "brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus," and they were at peace with God. They had turned to Him and were awaiting His Son from heaven.

Jesus," and they were at peace with God. They had turned to Him and were awaiting His Son from heaven. There were no troubles, nor fears in this direction, there was not a cloud above. They were however going through a storm of another kind. Satan was raising the storm of persecution against them—tribulations and afflictions were being heaped upon them to force them into evil, or, if possible, to destroy their faith.

The apostle directs their hearts and minds to God, his words taking the form of a prayer or desire for them, showing how the apostle's own heart knew this sure refuge in the storm, and the power that could keep them in perfect peace, though surrounded by enemies and by evil. So he adds, "Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it," and then, "Brethren, pray for us;" for when our own hearts are brought sensibly into the presence of "the God of peace" we can pray for others. Space will not permit the further development of this most precious presentation of God to us in this character, in its application to the numberless details of the lives of each individual who has entered on the path of faith,* for it is in this paththat is, in the everyday life of God's people down here -that this has to be proved. We could not learn it otherwise: it is

"In the desert God will teach thee
What the God that thou hast found—
Patient, gracious, powerful, holy,
All His grace shall there abound."

We need not now dwell upon a somewhat similar

expression, used in the second epistle to the Thessalonians (see chap. iii. 16), except to remark that the apostle seems to introduce it in view of the efforts of the enemy to cause trouble and discord within—that is, amongst themselves—as well as from the enemies without. But whether it be the tribulations from with-

without. But whether it be the tribulations from withIn John xx. the reader will find in the Lord's words to His disciples what corresponds with the two scriptures we have considered. Twice there does He say "Peace be unto you." The first relates to their perfect acceptance, their position beyond all judgment and in assured blessing before God; the second refers to their pathway through the world, as sent by Him into it, and called to walk even as He walked, surrounded by sorrow, evil, and persecution.

Him as the God of peace, who delights in it, and is Himself the Source of it for His people; and not only so, but who will, in His own time and way, judge those who are troublers of His people, whether as opposing them from outside, or as bringing in any element of evil or self-will, which surely produces troubles and sorrows to those who desire to walk with God.

We may now briefly notice this expression in Rom. xvi. 20, and here we may further discover where lies the source of all the evil and trouble, namely, in the working of Satan, either to hinder and oppose the people of God, or to introduce seeds of discord and principles of evil amongst them through acting on the flesh in those who-though taking their place as Christians, and, it may be, having found peace for their consciences through believing in Christ-yet have never learned what it is to "have no confidence in the flesh," and who are not walking in true self-judgment. Hence the enemy gains power in their hearts, and uses them as tools for his own ends -even mischief and sorrow to the people of God. We do well to remember this; to look beyond those who may be the mere instruments of the enemy, and to be alive to the fact that Satan is ever acting. This casts us more upon God, and leads us to seek to deal with matters only as He may direct and open the way, and as His word instructs. Then the weapons of our warfare will not be carnal. (2 Cor. x. 4.) God, however, is always for His people; He delights

in their happiness and soon He will judge the enemy and the troubler of His people. He, as the God of peace, will bruise Satan under our feet shortly, setting us above his power, and giving complete triumph and deliverance, the enemy himself being judged and cast out, and no longer permitted either to accuse or to tempt.

Then, free and unhindered, we shall enjoy the presence of "the God of peace" for ever; but even now the desire of the apostle for the "beloved of God" (Rom. i. 7) is, "Now the God of peace be with you all." (Rom. xv. 33.)

For this present enjoyment there is a divinely marked path to be trod, and a divinely given way of dealing with all that might tend to trouble, or to produce distress. This is simply and beautifully set before us in Phil. iv. 6,-9. Following these directions with true exercise of heart we shall enjoy "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding," and "the God of love and peace" will be with us. The sense of His presence will be the enjoyed portion of the heart.

S. M. A.

SCRIPTURE NOTES.

I.

Romans iii. 25.

It has often been pointed out that the word rendered propitiation in this passage is really "mercy-seat," or propitiatory; that is, the place where propitiation was made. This will be readily understood if it be remembered that Aaron on the great day of atonement carried by divine direction the blood of the sin-offering into the holiest of all, and sprinkled it upon (also before) the mercy-seat. (See Lev. xvi. 14, 15.) Now it was the blood which was so sprinkled that constituted, as to the type, propitiation. It was sprinkled there for the eye of God, and met all His claims upon His people on

account of their sins; and inasmuch as it glorified Him in all that He was, it became the righteous basis of His dealings in grace with Israel from year to year. What was thus shadowed forth in the rites of the great day of atonement has been fulfilled in the death of Christ, even as John says, when speaking of Jesus Christ the righteous as the Advocate with the Father, "And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for the whole world." (1 John ii. 1, 2.) In like manner, Paul sets forth Christ as the answer to the blood-sprinkling upon the mercy-seat, for he distinctly mentions the blood after connecting Christ with the golden mercy-seat. Viewed thus, the words "set forth" are very significant. In the tabernacle the mercy-seat was concealed behind the veil; in the gospel Christ, as the mercy-seat, is publicly set forth before all, so that whoever receives the divine testimony to the efficacy of His precious blood (a testimony typified by the sevenfold sprinkling before the mercy-seat) may boldly draw near; and, it may be added, whosoever thus approaches will discover that God is both just and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

II.

Psalm lxxxiv. 5; John xiv. 6.

An examination will show, we judge, a very interesting connection between these two scriptures. The subject of the psalm is Jehovah's tabernacles, where the living God dwelt and was worshipped; and in verse 5 the man is pronounced blessed whose strength was in God, and in whose heart were the ways, the known ways, to the house, for the next two verses describe their character and their attendant exercises. Two things thus mark

the blessedness of such a man. Having come to the end of himself, he had learned the secret of all strength in entire and absolute dependence upon God; and, secondly, his affections having been centred upon the courts of the Lord, his heart cherished the ways which would issue in his appearing in Zion before God. The subject of the first part of the chapter in John is the Father's house, and the Father's house is to the Christian what Jehovah's tabernacles were to the Jew. The Lord Himself displayed before the eyes of His disciples the beauty of the Father's house, and made it attractive to their hearts, by revealing that He was going to prepare a place for them among the many mansions which it contained; and by promising that He would Himself return, and, receiving them unto Himself, would introduce them into the place which He had made ready for them. What an encouragement for their troubled hearts at such a moment! And then, just as in the psalm, He speaks of the way. If the Father's house is revealed, the way to it must be known and cherished, while down here in the wilderness, when passing through the valley of Baca; and, blessed be His name, the way is Himself. "How can we know the way?" says Thomas. "I am the way . . . no man cometh unto the Father but by me," for He indeed was also that revelation of the Father. How

III.

own Person!

everything, all our blessedness, is contained in His

Jonn iii. 5.

As a matter of exposition we cannot doubt that there is a parallelism between the two clauses of this verse, and that both are to be interpreted in the same way. The force of the first will thus govern

the meaning of the second. We are there plainly told that what is born of the flesh has the flesh for its origin ($\epsilon \kappa \tau \hat{\eta}_S \sigma \alpha \rho \kappa \hat{\sigma}_S$), is flesh; that is, it is of the same nature. So likewise that which is born of the Spirit has the Spirit for its origin (ἐκ τοῦ Πνεύματος) is of the same nature. To interpret the first sentence in one way, and the second in another, would, as may be gathered from the context, introduce confusion into our Lord's discourse: for we are here taught that inasmuch as that which is born of the flesh cannot enter into the kingdom of God, it is of necessity that man must be born of water and of the Spirit. To be introduced into that new moral sphere, where God's authority is recognised as supreme, he must possess a new nature—a nature in consonance with His whose authority is to be owned. This is doubtless elementary, but it is the divine commencement in the soul which, in this present period, will issue, sooner or later, in the full Christian place and condition. We cannot even have to say to divine things, cannot even see spiritually (v. 3) until we are born again; but, having been born again, God in His blessed grace will, in His own way and time, complete the work which He has commenced. On the general subject the following words may be read with advantage: "It is therefore a mighty word of God which, since man must be born again in the principle and source of his moral being, judges, as being death, all that is of the flesh. But there is in fact the communication of a new life; that which is born of the Spirit is spirit, is not flesh, has its nature from the Spirit. It is not the Spirit-that would be an incarnation; but this new life is spirit. It partakes of the nature of its origin,"

READINGS AT CROYDON.

IV.—THE WILDERNESS.

Exodus xv. 22-27; Numbers xxi. 4-9, 16-18.

Our subject this evening is the wilderness. The first

thing we have to learn is at the end of chapter xiv., that the only way out of Egypt was through the Red Sea, figuratively the death of Christ. Israel are out of the ruin and misery of Egypt through death, and now they go three days' journey in the wilderness, and they find nothing but bitter water. It was a great disappointment to them. Hence they called it Marah. I think we talk of the wilderness and of wilderness truth, but for my part I know but little of the wilderness. We have to learn it experimentally. These three chapters, xv., xvi., xvii., set forth the grace of God for the wilderness. There is nothing there for you but God. Then after thirty-nine years Israel came to Numbers xxi., and now they find that they are unmendably bad. That is the great experience of the wilderness on our side. Then there is entrance on a new order of things. The Son of man, typified by the brazen serpent, must be lifted up, and every believer in Him now finds life in Christ, and the Spirit of God is given to him.

Is there any relation between the law and the wilderness?

The law does not come in till after chapter xvii., it comes in to expose our natural state. It is added because of transgression. You now come practically to Romans vii. You find out that you are unimprovable.

A man who knew that would be prepared for death here. The apostle can say, "Death works in us."

You said at the end of thirty-nine years they found they were unmendably bad, is that what the wilderness is for?

My impression is, you are not in your true path in the wilderness until you learn "that in me (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing." The three chapters here set forth how God is for you in the wilderness, but I do not think you are a dependent man till you know yourself as a "wretched man."

Would you say that again, please?

I think until you have learned the nothingness of yourself you do not take your true place in the wilderness; you see that Israel after Numbers xxi. had no other support than the manna which they had at the beginning, but until then they were not really dependent on God.

There is this difference, that with them the first part of the wilderness was a test to man in the flesh, but we begin with the flesh judged.

Yes; but though you may have accepted the doctrine, you have practically to learn it. You are thoroughly in the wilderness if you are wholly dependent on God. There is nothing for a Christian from the earth.

He is not dependent on God until he has judged the flesh?

No. Yet we very often accept the truth, but circumstances disclose how much of the truth we have.

Would you say that when Israel had learned that lesson they were at the end?

They come out now in a new light, they are standing

for God, and yet they had no other food than the manna, and they encounter a new enemy—Balaam.

There is no spiritual conflict, is there, until a man has learned dependence?

It is when you are dependent on God that you are assailed. I do not see that you are truly dependent except manna is your food. I think, practically speaking, there is nothing one knows so little about as manna.

Will you tell us what manna is?

Well, I will put another question to you. There was no manna in the ark in the temple, it was only in the tabernacle. Why?

When Israel are in the land, God's requirements of man will be fully carried out. I understand living by manna to be living in complete dependence upon God.

What does it typify?

Christ in humiliation. Now, will you explain what that is? I cannot. I see what it is. I think one has little idea of what it is to do everything in dependence.

But the manna was given before the law?

The law was to test.

I think it shows that God's provision for His people in the wilderness was there before the law was given at all.

Yes; but when they came to Numbers xxi. they did not get more than the manna. When a man is tested he does not get any more than manna.

I think you do not enter into the wilderness properly until you get to Numbers xxi.

Still, it is not all in a minute that you come to that. The expression has been used "in the land." What

does it mean?

It means in Canaan. There Israel will enjoy earthly blessings—not living simply in dependence on God where there was nothing else for them. Many would like to live now, as surrounded with favours from the earth. There is abundance for you on the earth, but not from it.

Then we still need the manna because we are in the wilderness?

It is your only support. The question is how much you use it.

The manna and the old corn of the land overlap, do they not?

Practically in our experience they do. If you do not know John vi. and feed upon Him as your life you cannot know Him as manna. You could not begin at manna and go up to the other. If you do not know what it is to have fed upon Christ in death you cannot learn what His grace was here as man. You must go that way to learn it.

That is, we begin with Him in death.

But I think most have connected John vi. with manna.

That has hindered a great many. You must learn John vi. in order to arrive at the manna. It is the contrast to the manna.

You mean we begin with Christ in death?

How do you get out of Egypt? By death—by walking through the Red Sea. You have fed upon Christ's death, you are in Christ now. Now the point is how you are to go on here. If you are true, you accept death. The highest place a Christian can come to is typified in these chapters. The way before you is death. I have not met many who like that

path, have you? But I believe it is a path of great blessing. Instead of getting something more to interest you here, you find that things are fading away. We see Paul in prison and John in Patmos at the end of their course. I know I am in the wilderness when I have nothing from man, but everything from God. "I have learned in whatsoever state I am to be content." I think it is a great thing for a Christian

The wilderness does not typify a place.

but God.

No, it does not, it is moral, it is not a place to stop in, it is to pass through.

to learn that there is nothing for him in the wilderness

And it is not any part of God's counsels? No.

What is the difference between John vi. and manna?

John vi. is, You have "passed out of death into life."

How can you get out of death but by death? You cannot act on a thing that is dead. Therefore the truth applies. A Christian according to Romans vi. reckons himself "dead to sin, but alive unto God"—not "through," but "in Christ Jesus our Lord." Now you are going to begin a new history upon earth. What do you expect? Something pleasing to the flesh? No, but bitter water. "Arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin." You do not get that till you get to Numbers xxi.

Would you say a word more on "always delivered unto death"? Is it the same as "reckon yourselves dead?"

No; death is on everything. Everything is gone for Paul, even Jerusalem is gone. Paul could not

always say he longed to depart, for he was full of Jerusalem.

There is great gain in accepting death.

The apostle says to the Corinthians, "Death works in us, but life in you."

But there is a great difference when we accept that.

If I had accepted it years ago I should have been

saved many a trial. You are sure to be disappointed when you expect smooth times in the wilderness. The gourd comes up in a night, and withers in a night.

This I call bitter water.

In Peter it is "ceased from sinning."

Quite so. He begins at the fact of sinning. "Arm yourselves therefore," &c.

The flesh must suffer to do it. You do not gratify the flesh. You suffer; the sin is stopped. If you gratify the flesh you commit a sin.

I suppose the basis for carrying it out is Romans vi. and vii.?

Yes; those chapters give you the basis for learning

the wilderness, and every day you learn more and more what is to be refused. I think Deuteronomy viii. will help us. He "led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments, or no." The first temptation Satan presents to Christ is to use His own power. The Lord, as a dependent man, says, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God."

It is a pity we do not begin with manna.

I quite agree to that, but we have to *learn* dependence. We are learning it, I hope. Nothing gives me such a sense of what the devil is as that he should ask the Lord to use His own power to turn a stone into bread. If I look around I say, Where is there a dependent man? No one as a rule is dependent when he has independent means. Mr. Wigram has said he would know a rich man, if he met him, by his self-reliance.

A self-reliant man is not dead to sin.

He certainly is not bearing about in his body the dying of Jesus. Often we think a poor man is the only one who needs faith, but it is the rich man who needs it most.

Is that why it says, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God"?

Exactly. If God does not direct you to do a thing, you have gone outside Him-it is your own will.

When you can say, I can do it if I like, I say, Take care what you do.

I do not think we sufficiently recognize that independence is sin. It is so touching, the Lord saying, I will act only by the word of God. The man who gives way to the first temptation will fall under the second. He will accept a slice of the world, and then he will look for God to show him some proof of His favour.

Casting Himself down from the pinnacle you mean? Yes. I do not seek proofs of His care when I

know He is for me.

What does "death worketh in us, but life in you" mean?

It means you must be in life first, because you have been dead, and then you are ready to accept death here. "Always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus." There are three classes of believers. One does not know how to be dead to sin. Another does know, but is not always there. Another, the apostle Paul, was always there. He was truly in the wilderness. Hence God rolls in death. When anything is in the way, and you are trying to turn from it, you will find that death is rolled in upon it.

Power is given for the action?

Quite so. The stone does not go from before the wheel till the wheel comes to it.

Rolling in death is God dealing with things I have to pass through?

Yes; but He comes in to help you. I said to a young man once, "Are you in that position for the

Lord's service?" He said "No," but that he would give it up in three months. Shortly after his horse rolled on him in the park, and he had to give it up there and then. Perhaps if he had never felt his position, he would not have been helped to give it up. God thus helps a man in a way he cannot help himself. A Christian who is not progressing has an easier path.

Always being delivered is not what we do, but what God does for us?

Yes. He is not pressing you beyond your measure. Paul was cast into prison. You might think this too severe discipline, but he had better times there than he had before; he had such revelations from the Lord. If you progress you are opposed. Amalek would prevent you from being in the wilderness a dependent man; he would drive Israel back to Egypt. On the other hand Balaam represents the corrupting influence of society; he comes after Numbers xxi.; from him the Corinthians suffered.

Not necessarily religious?

No. You get infected in worldly society. One sees it in one's children.

But Balaam's aim was to turn them away from God? Quite so; but, first, it is Amalek—to hinder you being truly in the wilderness. Now that you know John iii. and iv.—life in Christ, and the Spirit of God in you—you begin to stand for the Lord; you are leaving the wilderness for the land. Now Balaam confronts you.

What is the object of Balaam?

Balaam's opposition is a contrast to Amalek's. Amalek comes forth to fight openly to resist you, while Balaam seeks to corrupt you by social intercourse.

Those are the two ordinary forms of evil—violence and corruption.

What Amalek seeks is to prevent you from taking the place of dependence. But now you have power.

Would the purpose of Balaam be to prevent your entering into life?

You have entered it.

I mean the associations of life.

I quite agree, because in them you would eventually cross over Jordan.

Amalek is the first power of the enemy?

Yes, the first on entering the wilderness. There were four. 1st, Pharaoh. He has been destroyed, Satan annulled. Next, Amalek, to prevent you from being a dependent man. When you have learned to have no confidence in the flesh, when you have experimentally accepted Romans vi. and vii., then you are on new ground. Thirdly, you are opposed by Balaam. There is an interval between Balaam and the last, which is the seven nations of Canaan. You confront these where you are, in the power of your heavenly position.

Who are the four then?

Pharaoh; he is gone in death. Then Amalek, then Balaam, and then the seven nations, as in Ephesians vi. If one realized the true nature of the opposition to us on the earth, what a time should we have here!

Will you go back to the manna as to its application to us?

It is your only support here—even after you are over Jordan. You can, as a Christian, get nothing from this scene; hence it is a wilderness to you. But God gives you manna.

The manna adapts itself to our daily circumstances. It is given to the Christian in the wilderness.

You limit it then to our wilderness-path, not to what we had last night?

Yes, I limit it to the wilderness. "Part with me" is as He is now.

Would that be the old corn of the land?

Yes. The manna is the grace of Christ as He walked here, as we read, Gal. ii. 20, "The life that I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God."

It is the responsible life in the wilderness?

Exactly. I think one knows very little about manna. I think the idea of our blessed Lord, the Son of God, being a dependent man is too wonderful to compass. One could understand it better during the three years of his ministry, because then, if you understand me, it was His own side of things—declaring the Father. To us His thirty years in private life, when He acted in everything in dependence on God, is incomprehensible. What a life of beauty in a man! It was not anything He found here, for He brought all here.

Of course that is not the whole truth of His life.

Oh! He had communion with the Father always. But at the end of the thirty years the voice from heaven declared, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

We are told so little about those thirty years. Would it be the hidden manna?

Oh! I think there is something in His life that we do not understand.

But we shall learn it probably.

Quite so. But the more you think of it the more you marvel. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

How do we get manna?

Christ gives it. "The life that I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God." If you have Christ as your life you are living in His grace down here, the grace of a dependent man.

Is it Phil. ii.?

There He is our example.

Do we get it through the Scriptures?

The Scriptures tell you what you are to get. People think it is by reading the Scriptures that you obtain grace. Scripture tells you what you are to get.

Do you mean you get it by occupation with Christ?

Yes, certainly, I get grace from the Lord Himself—"By the faith of the Son of God."

Is it the contemplation of Christ in the gospels?

As I understand, it is actually imparted to you from Himself, as the Spirit of God occupies you with Him. I said once to a sister, "When you were in the storm at sea, what were you thinking of?" She replied, "I was thinking of the Lord in the storm." "Ah," I

returned, "if you had been occupied with Him where He is, you would have been like Him where He was."

Then manna is support?

It always is.

Do you mean that if we get occupied with Him where He is, we can act as He did?

Yes, we can act as He did, but you must gather it before the sun is up. It has led to morning prayers, I daresay. I ought to begin everything, assured that His grace is sufficient to carry me through. If you have the manna for the day you may start, you are sure to be brought to the desired haven whatever you undertake.

It is not simply by meditating you get it?

You feed on Christ's death to enjoy His life. If you abide in Him you will walk here as He walked. He left us an example that we should follow His steps.

I should think that if we were occupied with the Lord we should feed on Him as the manna.

But you must begin above with Him where He is. You cannot begin with Him here—He is not here.

I thought the manna was Christ in humiliation.

Yes, but you must be in the life of Christ outside of everything first. Then He leads you out according to the grace in which He lived here, even in the smallest details.

May we take Stephen as an example? He expressed himself as the Lord did.

Exactly, and no doubt he came out like Him.

What is the old corn of the land?

It is life in heaven. It is where it grew. If you had said then you must eat the old corn of the land before the manna, I should have agreed with you.

down here: that is manna. Galatians ii. 20 includes both. Christ liveth in me, and I am living down here. "The life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God."

I did not connect the words "faith of the Son of God" with earth before. I connected it with Him where He is; but it says, "who loved me, and gave Himself for me."

Quite so, that confirms it.

You say the wilderness is necessary for us? Yes: I think the trials and sorrows make Christ

nearer and dearer to us. He is the manna, the smitten rock, and the intercessor, your true provision in the wilderness. The testing supervenes in order that you may know yourself, and thus be in happy dependence. To me it is a new thought that we do not feed on the manna morally till after we have passed through

Numbers xxi. You are not ready for it till then. Israel was not ready for it. We read, "Our soul loatheth this light bread."

I always thought that the food of our souls here was manna, but many Christians have never really fed on it.

That is just what I said to the sister when in a

storm. If you are only thinking of the Lord in the storm you are not like Him. You would be like Him

where He was if you were living in Him where He is, What is "our soul loatheth this light bread"?

They could not brook dependence. If you want a picture of a Christian in the wilderness read Romans xii. and xiii.-responsibility to Christ, the church and the world. You are in the wilderness, but God is for you.

Do we get manna apart from meditating upon the Scriptures?

Do you get the Holy Ghost from the Scriptures? No.

Well, the Scriptures give you nothing, they tell you what you are to get. The Scriptures reveal to you the blessings given to you, but you have to enjoy them. There are two classes of readers. One reads to get the meaning of the words, and the other in order to be in the mind of God. In the Scriptures you get the Lord. They set you longing then.

They satisfy the longing then?

Oh! except you are exercised you do not get anything. First you receive the light of the word, then there is exercise, then prayer, and then the Spirit makes it good to you.

In regard to the manna, a great many people think it is a sort of recalling what Christ was here; but I think it is daily grace for daily need.

To be sure it is—the grace in which He walked here.
But does not that come to us very much in the way
of reminiscence?

There is no store in you. Yesterday's manna is worse than useless. All grace must come fresh from Christ.

than useless. All grace must come fresh from Christ.

Do we all understand that meditation is not feeding?

A cow furnishes a good pattern—it first takes in, then ruminates, then assimilates it.

That is getting the good of what you have taken in.

Now you have it. That is the next step. You get the good first, and you then are in keeping with it.

J. B. S.

THE PASSOVER-PILGRIMS AND PEACE.

Exodus xii. 1-13.

JEHOVAH'S communications to Moses were to the effect that He would bring Israel out of Egypt (Exodus iii. 8), and bring them into the land of Canaan, not merely releasing them, but having a definite purpose and place before Him for the redeemed nation. In chapter vi. 7 is added to this, "I will take you to me for a people," thus going beyond the former undertaking, which only involved a transfer from one place to another, in adding the announcement that they were destined to be Jehovah's portion and people, than which there could be no higher earthly blessing. For us it is in still higher measure as predestinated "unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself" (Eph. i. 5), and "all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ." (2 Cor. v. 18.)

In the progress of God's accomplishment of this purpose, ten desolating judgments were sent by Him, the remarkable characteristic of all, except the last, being that Jehovah's people were exempted from them, shewing the discriminating power of His judgments in excluding them from these terrible visitations of His anger.

Chapter x. is somewhat different, and probably for this reason; viz., that the judgment of death is universal; "the wages of sin is death," "sin entered . . . and death by sin." Death reigned throughout the land of Egypt, including the land of Goshen, on that appalling night, but in the latter place in a remarkable form; viz., sub-

stitutionally. The vindication of God's righteousness is made good, either personally upon the Egyptian, type of the unsaved soul, or by substitution upon Israel, through the medium of the Passover Lamb; Israel being the type of the believer, for whom the Lamb of God has borne the judgment of death; "for even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us." (1 Cor. v. 7.)

In Exodus xii. we have certain cardinal points linked teacther by Jaharah, as either constituting on

In Exodus xii. we have certain cardinal points linked together by Jehovah, as either constituting or accompanying redemption, any of which being ignored, redemption at this stage loses its complete divine character.

The first, as has been noted, is substitution, in which

of course the perfection and death of the victim are the principal thoughts. Following this, appropriation of that death, as when Israel ate of the lamb, "not raw, but "roast with fire; and unleavened bread and with bitter herbs they shall eat it"; that is, we have here expressed in type, the believer's spiritual apprehension of the atoning sufferings of Christ (personally the unleavened One, as in 2 Cor. v. 21), together with bitterness of soul, under the figure of bitter herbs, in connecting his sins with the sufferings of God's Lamb upon Calvary's cross. This is figuratively appropriated in the fact of the Israelites eating within the lamb whose blood on the door posts and lintel sheltered them from the destroying angel. But thus protected, and having appropriated the death that delivered, there was a special and important character, in which on that momentous night Jehovah required that Israel should appear before Him; viz., as pilgrims: "Thus

shall ye eat it (verse 11) with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand"; that

is, God identifies the pilgrim character with IIis redeemed people, from the first moment that they come under the shelter of the blood. Solemn and important fact for believers, for us, who, though we may not and cannot in a sense forget that we are sheltered by the blood (that being a positive cause of relief from the pressure of judgment upon our consciences) are in immense danger of forgetting the pilgrim character, which is inseparably bound up in God's thoughts with redemption. The reason is, that, in contrast to the relief of knowing we are safe, this calls for a path which constitutes exercises and difficulties throughout its whole extent. Nevertheless we are not, whether younger or older in the faith, in the current of the divine mind as to redemption, or in the pathway that leads to the discovery of heavenly resources in an earthly scene, unless voluntarily this pilgrim character is taken up; and that as distinct from its being enforced by God. For since for Him we are only and truly pilgrims here, He will by pressure of circumstances, if needed, teach us with sorrow and loss to ourselves that it is the only

dealings with many of His own.

But if thus pilgrims at the outset, and for the future, Israel were also intended to be in the unclouded enjoyment of peace with Jehovah, in view of the solemn fact of His judgment against evil; a peace measured, as to its practical realisation, by the faith and confidence each individually possessed in Jehovah's word, "When I see the blood I will pass over you." No

shadow of doubt need darken the blood-sprinkled

character suited to the scene in which He leaves us temporarily, which will explain the character of God's 270

houses, for Jehovah's word was pledged, and the lamb was of His own special ordering. Happy Israelite! In the midst of devastating judgment, kept in perfect peace. "At midnight . . . a great cry . . . not a house where there was not one dead"; but where the blood rested, whether faith was weak or strong, there was perfect security from the sword of the destroying angel; and this too is the privilege of every believer now, in a scene under sentence of God's judgment, enjoying unclouded peace with God, on higher ground, in fuller relationship, than that on which Israel stood to God. Thus the pilgrim character, and peace with Jehovah were linked very beautifully together, while both were identified with protection, the whole being founded on substitution; and afterwards, when Israel failed as pilgrims, Jehovah would remind them often of that wonderful redemption, the first step of which assured them of peace with Him.

It is well to note also the place which the hyssop has, and its apparent typical meaning. It is unmentioned by God in His instructions to Moses, for the value of the blood before Him was all to Him, but when Moses communicates the divine mind to Israel, doubtless with divine approval, in touching upon the detail of how the blood is to be sprinkled, he instructs Israel to take a bunch of hyssop. (v. 22.)

Looking at it as typifying the obedience of faith (the peace within, already considered, suggesting the joy of faith), it is scarcely credible that an Israelite could have been found who was more occupied with the feeble instrument (1 Kings iv. 33), by means of which he conformed to Jehovah's requirements that the blood should be put upon the doorposts and lintel,

than with the blood itself and Jehovah's word as to it. Neither the quality nor the quantity of the hyssop would enter into his mind as a matter to be for one moment occupied with. Yet, alas! how many there are in this so-called Christian age, who, while assured that it is the "blood that maketh atonement for the soul," are week after week, month after month, year after year, engrossed in an unhappy occupation with the quality and quantity of their faith. How often such a remark as this escapes the lips of one long exercised about salvation: "Alas! my faith is not as strong or clear as I could desire." What would you think, dear friend-for it is for such especially I comment on this-of an Israelite, when encouraged by another to have full confidence in the blood of the lamb and the word of Jehovah, replying, "Alas! my bunch of hyssop is not of the quality or quantity I could desire." Would not he receive for answer, "Foolish man, hath not Jehovah said, 'The blood

"Foolish man, hath not Jehovah said, 'The blood [not the hyssop] shall be a token to you upon your house'; and again, 'When I see the blood [not the hyssop] I will pass over you."

How beautiful the simplicity of God's word as to what faith really is: "He that hath received His testimony hath set to his seal that God is true." (John iii. 33.) This was simply and only what Israel did; no activity of theirs, though activity there was in exercised consciences, in obedience to Jehovah's directions, and in trusting faith, for a moment obscured the fact for

activity of theirs, though activity there was in exercised consciences, in obedience to Jehovah's directions, and in trusting faith, for a moment obscured the fact for them, that all depended upon Jehovah being as good as His word; and as the obedience of faith led up to the joy of faith then, so now the one who has "set to his seal that God is true," and only this one, has the

joy that is connected with unqualified trust in God's word. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. v. 1.)

M. C. G.

THE REMNANT.

Isaian vi. and John xii. 37-43.

In John xii. we have the fulfilment of Isaiah vi., and verses 37-43 sum up the result of our Lord's labours amongst His earthly people. Before the closing testimony of Jesus is given in verses 44-50 this divine comment seems to intervene. It shews us the different effects upon the hearts of those who had witnessed His miracles and listened to His words. On the one hand there was unbelief and hardness of heart, and on the other the "fear of man that bringeth a snare."

There seems to be a peculiar pathos in the words that commence this section of scripture—a tone of mingled regret and pity running through them; "but though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him." As though everything had been tried but without avail. Miracle after miracle had been performed, as indisputable proof that He was the sent One of the Father, until at last, when nothing more remained to be done, patience having reached its utmost limit, a judicial blindness set in, which left every rejecter of the testimony in utter darkness.

The words in verse 39 may present a difficulty to some; but we have to remember adequate testimony had been given in what Christ had said and done, and therefore they were responsible and without excuse.

"Lord, who hath believed our report, and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?" It was only after such testimony was refused that we read, "Therefore they could not believe." All this proves that the natural man - even the religious man - is utterly incapable of himself of receiving the things of God, or knowing anything about them. The Jews set themselves up to be judges, and said in effect to Jesus, "Shew us a sign that we may believe Thee"; but when the sign was given they were as far as ever from believing. It shews that what is needed is not miracles without, but the work of the Holy Spirit within, before we can receive God's testimony. May it teach us that however advanced we are, yet there is nothing in ourselves that can for a moment be trusted in relation to the things of God, that we are dependent upon Him at every step.

It is indeed a dark picture presented to us here in John xii.; but the Holy Ghost not only gives us the fulfilment of Isaiah vi. as regards the unbelief of the people, but graciously adds a word or two for our comfort, reminding us of the glory of the One who was thus rejected. "These things said Esaias when he saw His glory and spake of Him," surely intimating that the glory was to be seen in John xii, as in Isaiah vi., and shewing what really should occupy us in a dark day. Here we have a man in the secret of God. And a man in the secret of God always speaks of the glory of Jesus. An unalterable purpose exists in the heart of the Father concerning the glory of His beloved Son, and this purpose He will never forego. Where this is known it gives rest and stability to the heart in the most adverse circumstances; but in order to know it

presence. He says, "I saw also the Lord"; and what

did he hear? This is what he heard, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory"; and yet precisely at this moment Isaiah is told to "go and make the heart of this people fat, and to close their eyes, &c., until the cities be wasted, without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate." How then could the whole earth be full of His glory? Only because God is what He He has a purpose concerning His beloved Son, whether in connection with an earthly people or a heavenly people, and He will give effect to it in His own way and time, whatever failure there may be on man's part. Have you and I, dear reader, deeply implanted in our souls God's thoughts about Christ? And do we delight to think that the glory of Jesus is everlastingly secured? Have we learnt that in everything God is doing He has one object, viz., the glory of His Son? He has glorified Him at His own right hand. The Holy Ghost too glorifies Him by taking of His things and shewing them unto us, and presently the whole earth shall be full of His glory. May all this be immovably fixed in our hearts. And while we are conscious that the dark day is growing ever darker, may we, like Isaiah, occupy an inside place, that we too may "see His glory and speak of Him."

There is another resemblance between Isaiah vi. and John xii., for in both cases there is a remnant. When the whole nation of Israel was about to be judicially blinded God graciously adds, "But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten: as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves: so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof." And God had a remnant in our Lord's time, and, like Isaiah, "they saw His glory." That glory was visible surely to those who had eyes to see it, when Mary took the "pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment." In Isaiah's day we read "the house was filled with smoke" at the presence of the Lord of hosts. That same One is here in the person of the lowly Jesus, and now the house is "filled with the odour of the ointment." In the one case He comes upon the scene in His majesty

as Lord of all the earth, and in the other as the Saviour

of sinners, the One about to die in order to do the Father's will. What different glories attach to the same Person! How varied! And it is with these varied glories of Christ that the remnant is ever occupied, whether it be in His character as Son of David, or head of His body the church, or "the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father." To them Jesus is everything, and again the house is "filled with the odour of the ointment." "Because of the savour of Thy good ointments, Thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love Thee." (Cant. i. 3.) Let us now consider for a moment the consequence of seeing the glory. "He saw His glory and spake of Him." This refers, no doubt, not only to what is recorded in chapter vi., but to a great deal that follows in that wonderful book, almost every breath of which comes perfumed with that "name which is above every name." Truly nothing opens the lips like a sight of

the glory and beauty of Christ; it is indeed "good

matter," and consequently the tongue soon becomes "the pen of a ready writer." If we know Christ we must speak of Him. It was so with Anna, who "spake of Him to all that looked for redemption in Jerusalem"; with Paul, who says he counted "all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus" his Lord; with Peter, who was an eye-witness of His majesty; and the effect will be the same with ourselves, though in a smaller measure, if only we are occupied with the same Person.

May the glory of the Lord fill our souls; and then we shall not be occupied with the shortcomings and defects of one another. From Genesis to Revelation there is one paramount theme; and when we read the Scriptures may we never fail to see His glory, and then, like Isaiah, we shall speak of Him. We shall then be in concert with God Himself, who has said, "I will make Thy name to be remembered in all generations; therefore shall the people praise Thee for ever and ever." (Psalm xlv. 17.)

We have now briefly to consider two solemn verses which close this section. "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on Him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." Here we have a contrast to the remnant. Not because they did not believe, but because they did not confess. They lacked devotedness. They saw that to openly confess Christ would be to forfeit their religious position, and they were not ready to say with Paul, "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ."

We may well ask, "How is it with ourselves?" In

seeking to be disciples of Christ we shall certainly find ourselves in opposition to the religious world. There were two things that hindered the chief rulers from confessing Christ. One was, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; and the other, they would not forfeit the praise of men. The same influences are still at work. While you retain your religious position men will praise you for your good works and your philanthropy; but the moment you see that Christianity publicly has become a vast human system with only a name to live, and that to be faithful to Christ you must leave it, then you will have to choose between the praise of men and the praise of God.

May these two divine comments of the Holy Ghost

be made a blessing to us—the one as an encouragement, "These things said Esaias when he saw His glory and spake of Him," and the other as a warning, "For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God."

God has a remnant in this day, as in Isaiah vi. and

John xii. May we be occupied in a similar way to Isaiah and Mary, with the glory of Christ, and then at last with them we shall one day receive the praise of God.

R. E.

For faith, we are dead, not alive, in the world. Hence also, everything that practically makes us realise this—trial, suffering, sorrow—is gain. It makes morally true and real in our souls, that we are dead, and thus delivers from the old man. "In all these things is the life of the Spirit." It is disengaged and delivered from the obscuring and deadening influence of the old man. These sorrows and breaches in life are the details of death morally. But of the death of what? Of the old man. All is gain.

"PLEASURES FOR EVERMORE."

Oн, scenes of heavenly joy!

The Father's house above,

Where cloudless peace without alloy

Dwells in that home of love.

There glory bright and fair
Shines with celestial beam;
For He who suffered once is there,
The centre and the theme.

The Father's full delight
Circles around the Son,
And countless tongues in heaven unite
To tell what He hath done.

The Lamb enthroned is there,
And doth engage each heart.
There myriad saints Christ's likeness bear,
And have with Him their part.

And, oh! what heavenly light
Euraptured ones behold,
And enter 'midst that glory bright
To joys on joys untold.

There holiness most bright

Each brow before Him wears;

While clothed in robes than snow more white

The ransomed saint appears,

The Lamb's full glories shine, Each saint reflects a ray, Like gems illum'd by light divine, Lustrous through endless day. Praise Him who made us meet
With saints in light to dwell;
We'll cast our crowns before His feet,
Whose love we know so well.

E'en now we taste the love,
And know the mighty power,
By which we'll rise to realms above
When waiting time is o'er.

Praise Him again, again,
Who did the cross endure;
In Him the yea, in Him amen,
Praise Him for evermore

T. W. P.

SCRIPTURE NOTE.

I,

1 Peter i. 9.

It is a question whether salvation in this verse is used with a different meaning from that found in verses 5 and 10. In these there cannot be a doubt that salvation is looked upon as future, and hence as comprising all the blessedness of full redemption—everything secured by Christ for His people through His death and resurrection, including our raised and changed bodies, and conformity to His own image. This belongs indeed to Peter's line, viewing believers, as he does, in the wilderness, as strangers and pilgrims, and as such subjected to every kind of suffering and testing, that the trial of their faith "being much more precious than of gold which perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour

and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." As ever, therefore, when saints are in the wilderness, and under responsibility, the appearing of Christ is their goal; and then they enter upon the enjoyment of salvation. (See Heb. ix. 28.) It must thus be weighed whether the term "the end of your faith" does not refer to the same period. It is quite true that there is a present assurance of acceptance in Christ, which the believer, who is walking in the power of the Holy Ghost, enjoys in the most adverse circumstances; but whether this is the teaching of this scripture is another thing. If, however, it is asked, Is not the phrase "the salvation of your souls" in express contrast with the words "salvation ready to be revealed in the last time"? the answer is, Not necessarily. As another has said, "It is in contrast with temporal deliverances, to which, as Jews, they were accustomed to look." If, however, the reader prefer to regard the "salvation of souls" (the literal rendering) as a present thing, there is no objection. Certainly it is for our present comfort and sustainment that it is written, "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." But we submit, at the same time, that the words "full of glory" (exactly rendered, "glorified") look on to the end and issue of the pilgrim journey. We incline therefore to the interpretation of salvation in this verse, in the same pregnant and complete sense of the word found in the context; and the more confidently inasmuch as the apostle proceeds, "Of which salvation the prophets have enquired," etc.; for in the word salvation here he distinctly embraces "the glory [glories] that should follow."

READINGS AT CROYDON.

V.-THE HEAD.

COLOSSIANS i. 24-27.

At the second reading we had, "Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Until Christ be formed in you there is no real progress. Now you start from Christ living in you, and necessarily you are interested in His interests. Romans vi, you touch life in Christ for relief, and now you learn that He has His place in you, He lives in you, and now you enter into the circle of His interests. It is not now your own side-His grace to you. "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin"that is your side. Here it is His side—" Christ in you, the hope of glory." It is not the hope of going to heaven, but of appearing with Him in glory. As you see in chapter iii., "Then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." This is His side of things. The difficulty is to pass from our own side to Christ's side. Some of the most earnest Christians do not pass from their side to Christ's side. They like to hear of Christ in the ship—not on the water—though the latter is the place for the true heart, because it is where He is, the former is where He was. If you love Him you would like to be where He is. Look at Mary Magdalene. She says, "Tell me where thou hast laid Him and I will take Him away." She was not thinking of the difficulties. You may say she was ignorant. Affection is not always enlightened, but it is always ready for enlightenment. Enlightenment does not give you affection, it tells you how to use it. It is very important to us to see where the Colossians were. The apostle writes, he "had heard of their faith in Christ Jesus, and the love which they had to all the saints," and yet they did not know the mystery—Christ's side.

Then we must know Galatians ii, 20 before we come to this?

Certainly. I believe we do not make any advance till we know Galatians ii. 20.

There may be some here who were not present at our reading on that. Do you make it experimental?

Yes. I have lost the old man and got a better. Not Adam, but Christ. Therefore I am not trying to improve Adam, because he is gone.

Is that Christ formed in you?

That is Christ formed in you. You get it in the type. Isaac gets his right place. There is a moment in the history of the believer when Christ gets His right place in his soul, and there is a great advance in him from that time. I do not say that he is altered. The flesh is like Jack-in-the-box, the same as ever, but it is kept down.

Are we to understand that Galatians ii. 20 is the starting point for progress?

Yes. When the truth came out first, it was shown that a great work had been effected which could not be improved. That is, your standing was effected by the work of Christ upon the cross; and then that there was also a new state; but though it was brought out most distinctly by the one used of God to bring it out, many contented themselves with the standing without the state. And they practically put standing for state.

Would standing without state be like a well-found vessel without ballast?

It is like the prodigal before he was clothed and brought into the house. He could not be in a better standing with his father, but he did not enjoy it till he was fitted for it. You don't enjoy acceptance if you are not in the state for it. It is true of you, but your state is not according to it.

You are not in the enjoyment of the love of God unless you are in a spiritual state? I have found it so.

It is the right way to prove all truth in yourself. If you put the left shoe on the right foot you soon find your mistake.

In Galatians ii. 20 then I give up all confidence in myself as of Adam?

You have done with Adam. Practically "I am crucified," it does not say we. If you take the standing side, it is "our old man is crucified." (Rom. vi.) But your state is to be "always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus." No one gets any blessing but through death. Some say that John vi. is once for ever. I do not agree.

You mean we must accept death?

I mean you must feed on the death of Christ. It is not merely feeding on Scripture, but on Christ's death. That is John vi. The type is walking through the Red Sea.

I suppose Paul proved that Gal. ii. 20 was his normal condition?

Yes; he could say, "Always bearing about in my body the dying of Jesus."

Would you say a word about the state?

If you believe what God has done you have peace.

God has raised Christ from the dead. You are justified. That is your standing. Your state consequently is described in Romans v. 1-11.

Is Col. iii. 3 standing or state?

In Col. there is another subject. We shall come to that presently. Your state is that you are practically accepting what grace has accomplished for you. In Colossians you have died with Christ from the rudiments of the world. In Romans vi. you are dead to sin. In Colossians you are dead to the world.

The great point here is Christ's side of things.

"Christ in you, the hope of glory." It is not the hope of salvation. If you turn to chap. ii. 1, 2 you see your gain. "For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God. . . . in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." You see the Colossians had not come to this. They were on the ground of Acts ii. They were a godly company, but they did not know the mystery. There is no revelation of the head in Acts ii. They had the Holy Ghost, who could make them acquainted with Christ, but they did not know Christ as head.

Would you explain the order of the apprehension of the mystery?

I am coming to it. The first step is that you are brought into a new circle of things. That is Christ's glory. It is not about your side, it is "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Now we come to the great advantages. The apostle writes, "I have great conflict

for you." He would not have had great conflict if there had not been great opposition. He knew that there was a very dangerous snare impending. It was a combination of man's intellect and man's religion.

The two evils we have already seen with the Corinthians and the Galatians have now taken another form—with the Galatians it was human religion, with the Corinthians it was human wisdom. Now with the Colossians they combine under the plea of contributing to Christ, to help in His service. We see this described in Christendom. No one would be accepted as a minister who had not both learning and religion. I said to a brother once, "Do you see the Colossian snare among us?" "Yes," he said, "I do. The moment you see sanctimoniousness or learning prominent then the Colossian snare is at work."

Or any kind of mental activity?

Yes. Here the apostle was thinking of the gain, not of the loss. If you are occupied with the loss you have not seen the gain. "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Is there any one with any divine sense who would not say, I should like to know Him? It is not some, it is all. Now you will know what "Christ in you" is.

Now would you like to know how you get it? Turn to chapter ii. 10, "And ye are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power." Here you get the grace in which you are set. As you are complete in Him you cannot ADD to what is complete What can you add to it? How can my religion or my learning add to it? This you must first and firmly receive.

What is the force of in Him?

That it is standing. You are complete in Him. You may not realise it, but you are.

Does it bring in union?

You do not properly get union in this book. Only once the body is alluded to. In union you must reach the Person where the Person is. Here you are only outside of the world. Life is the great subject here, it is Christ's life, and what His life leads you into. The first point is, you are complete in Him. If you are seeking the Head what must you learn? That you are complete in Him without any learning or religion of your own.

Is it faith laying hold of this?

Yes, first you believe it, but if Christ is your life, if He is living in you, it must be so, for He is the head of all principality and power.

You mean that one is conscious of it?

Yes, I trust many would be able to say we are complete in Him. It is a Christian axiom.

We receive it in faith, I suppose, but we have the consciousness of it in the power of the Holy Ghost.

Standing, I always receive in faith, but it is made true in me by the Spirit of God.

Our brother's question was, How are we to realise it?
Only in Christ's life. We began with "Christ in you."

Are those the two points in John xiv., "Ye in me, and I in you," and, "At that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in me, and I in you"?

It is John's way of putting union.

How do we draw from these treasures?

In living his life, being directed by Him. The more He lives in you the more you enjoy His things. There is no difficulty when you see that you belong to another man, and that you are to do everything by Christ. The more fully Christ rules you the better you will be in all your relations here. There is nothing about your family in the law. But when you are in Christ your household is ordered by Him.

There are only two epistles where you get this

family circle. There is nothing about your family in Romans. You are to love your neighbour as yourself. That is the way to transact business. You do not attempt to alter the order of things here, you render honour to whom honour is due, you are not a citizen but a subject, you obey the powers that be. That is Romans. Here you are on different ground.

You are across Jordan in Colossians?
That will come out. Now if you read verse eleven

you get the second point. "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in the putting off of the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ." You see our translators put in the words "of the sins." You can understand a pious monk saying, "Well, if that means the flesh, all my penance is worthless." So that probably he put "the sins" in the margin. The next transcriber put it into the text. The fact is you are complete in Christ. Now you find that the old man is put away, the reproach of Egypt is rolled off. It is "putting off the body of the flesh." You do not require any of it, neither its learning nor its religion. We may say, "Would not Christ use the body and mind?" Yes, when He controls them. I have no doubt Paul was an accomplished speaker, but he was so reduced "that his bodily presence was weak and his speech contemptible," and yet doubtless he did more good than ever before. The power of God was with him. Paul was showing the Corinthians that what they were boasting in was not necessary for the Lord's service.

Is that why we do not get beyond Gilgal in Colossians?

Circumcision is different from crucifixion. In the latter the man is judicially ended before God, in the other he is put away.

What do you mean by not getting beyond Gilgal?

You are across the Jordan, and the body of the flesh is put away. You are not in Canaan, the heavenly places yet, you are only preparing for it. I remember Mr. Darby asking me once where I put Colossians, and I said "entering." He did not agree with me. I wrote to him afterwards and said "preparing to enter," and with this he agreed. There are three things—entering, possessing, and dwelling. Here you are preparing to enter.

Does verse 11 mean I am cut off from the flesh as much as Christ is?

Yes. It is in His death. The body of the flesh is put off.

I do not see the difference between this and Romans vi.

In the latter it is crucified—judicially ended. In the other it is put away. You cannot use it.

You mean practically put away.

It is no longer acknowledged.

It is the same death in both cases—the death of Christ.

Yes. Therefore it is "in whom," risen in Christ. The

real thing is, that the body of the flesh is put away. You can no longer use it.

You may now read verse 19 for another step. "And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God." You see one can be puffed up by his fleshly mind-"not holding the Head." You get hold of the Head individually. By two things you are prepared for this—one is, "You are complete in Him," and the other is to put "off the body of the flesh." I illustrate it in this way: A man emigrated with his friends, and as soon as they landed he said, "Now, let us burn the ship so that there cannot be any retrogression." Now you see the force of "in whom" ye are risen. You must hold the Head. Presently you will see when you hold the Head. In the 19th verse you have, "Not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God." All your resources come from the Head. I could understand a philosophic man being charmed with all this if he had not to set aside his own head. Then in verse 20 you read, "Wherefore if ye have died with Christ from the rudiments of the world." You see in Romans you do not get beyond death with Christ from the man. Now, it is the same death but it is over Jordan. You are dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world.

This would include the two forms you were speaking about?

Yes, you are outside of the world condition. You have not come to the heavenly places yet. If you are not apart from man, you certainly are not outside of the world.

Then you cannot hold the Head unless you are outside of the world?

Certainly not. You could not know Christ as Head but at His own side. If you knew Him, you would be sure to know Him there.

Now you see that you are dead with Him from the rudiments of the world. Next turn to chapter iii. Read four verses.

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory."

Now, "If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above." This shows that you are not there. "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." It is more correctly "but ye have died," but you have to learn it. You have to take that ground practically, and realise that you are outside of all here through the death of Christ. Hence we read "If ye then be risen." If you be dead with Him, you must be risen with Him, and "if ye be risen with Him, seek those things which are above."

Are the rudiments of the world in chapter ii. 20 all the mental and sentimental things?

It includes everything. You are clear of all belonging to this order of things.

Does "if" imply a doubt?

No, it implies responsibility, because you see, "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Your life is in Christ. Christ is in you, and He is

your life. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory."

Would you say Romans vi. is privilege and this responsibility?

Well, I do not know how it is privilege. You start with the fact, but you have to carry it out, But it is the reckoning of faith.

You can hardly call it the reckoning of faith. We are committed to death in baptism. The two things are very distinct. One is, you are to reckon yourself

dead, and the other is, He has given you the Spirit of God so that you can mortify the deeds of the body. You may try to count yourself dead, but you are not.

What does it mean, then, in Romans vi.? Well, it is the same word as for imputing righteousness. It is imputed to you. You have to carry it out.

How do you effect it? You first touch life in Christ for relief-"alive unto God, in (not through) Jesus Christ our Lord."

You would not consider it correct to speak of the reckoning of faith?

No, I would not, because it is "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Nothing gives such laxity as people thinking they can reckon themselves dead by faith. If you walk in the Spirit, you will not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. If you reckon that you are dead in the sight of God by faith, I agree with you, but it is not true in your own sight by faith.

But then I reckon as God reckons.

Sad work if God saw you as you see yourself. Romans vi. is only a treatise. Romans viii. is your state, not Romans vi. You believe that the old man has gone in the sight of God, but you now want that the man should be gone to you practically.

I was talking of the step before that.

That it is gone in the sight of God. That is God's side. I want to come to your side. How are you free? "He that is dead is justified from sin."

That is God's side?

No, it is your side. You cannot be practically dead to sin but by the Spirit of God. God has effected for us in the cross of Christ. You are justified by faith. Romans v. is faith, but Romans viii. is by the Spirit of God. God has cleared away everything from His eye in the cross. You say it has not gone from you practically. Well, yes; but God gives you the Holy Ghost, and now you can say "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

I once said to a young man, "Do you believe that the old man is gone in the cross?" "Yes," he replied. I then said, "If you were walking in the Spirit, would he be gone to you?" He had to say "Yes," or he would have put the Holy Ghost contrary to God.

That makes it plain. Faith lays hold of that which is true to God, and then the Spirit of God makes it true to you.

You would not get the Spirit except you had believed in Christ risen.

But you accept it on God's side. It is true for you, but it is also to be true to you. Therefore we read, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh"; and, "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." There is death to sin.

Then it is true to me? Yes.

So that we can say we begin with faith, but the power for continuance is by the Spirit?

You never lose the efficacy of the work of Christ. It is always true with God, and always true for you, but it is not always true to you but as you walk in the Spirit.

Do I understand that it is not by faith that I am in the power of Romans viii. 2, but by the Spirit of God?

Certainly. Now if you turn to Col. iii. you will see that you are in Christ's life. Now you accept circumcision. Read from verse 5, "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth. . . . But now, ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, &c. . . . And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him: where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all (every thing), and in all." Now you come to the Head.

When you get there are you holding the Head? You are. Christ is every thing then.

Is that union?

Not exactly. Union is not realized until you are brought to Christ where He is. Here it is the knowledge of the Head. It is a great thing to hold the Head, the source from which all grace comes. You practically accept circumcision, the whole body of the flesh is to be put off. Do you understand? A great many read this for practice, but it is more—that you practically accept all which has been done for you on the cross. The best illustration is Elisha's act when he got the power, he took up his own clothes and rent them in two. He not merely threw them off, but

rendered them useless. There are two parts in the body of the flesh—"lusts" which you must mortify, and "habits" which you must put off. You have put off the old man and put on the new—where there is neither Greek, learned man, nor Jew, religious man, nor man of any kind. The apostle enumerates all kinds of men to show that you are outside of all. You have reached where "Christ is every thing and in all." I know a great many to whom Christ is chief, but it is far more to be able to say He is every thing.

Does the "where" take you into the new place? It is not so much place here as that Christ is your

life. Now you derive from the Head.

When you speak of a new place you mean morally?

In a way you are on new ground. You have not

come to heaven yet.

Is it the practical realising of verse 11 and 12 of chapter ii.?

Yes, circumcision is accomplished for you. You have

to accept what has been done for you. You accept it whole, not in detail. The body of the flesh must be put off, as Elisha rent his clothes. You refuse everything of the old man. I am timid in speaking of it, but my impression is that you do not get direction from Christ as Head, except you are apart from everything connected with the old man. I used to look to the Lord to give me a word before I went to the meeting. I do not approve of this now. Very often I am like a blank sheet of paper. I have got nothing to say, and often when a word does come it is something I know very little about. Some ask, What is the difference between being led of the Spirit and being dictated to by the Head? I do not think the Spirit ever leads any-

one beyond his knowledge. One effective in speaking, never advances anything he does not know. But if Christ is known as Head, the effect is that you get an idea of it at the moment. The fact that it suits the company shows that it is the Head. If the Head was directing, there the right hymn would be given out-a hymn is leading the assembly in praise. A hymn that would suit yourself would not suit the company. If you take part in the assembly, you are supposed to be the organ or the expression of the assembly at the time.

Would it be possible to have a single eye unless we were in this place, outside of man?

I suppose not. In His light we see light. If you were directed by the Head to a hymn you would be assured of His support.

So we must not give out even a hymn without the Head?

Certainly not. Why do you say "even a hymn"? The hymns are the most important part. I can often pray when I could not give out a hymn, because a hymn is praise for grace you have received. But if the Head directs you?

Then He supports you.

This applies to prayer too?

Of course. If you have any pressure on your mind,

you will not pray, because you are not free. You have been speaking of guidance or direction. Do

you mean in the assembly, or in general?

I mean in Christ's own circle. Christ is the Head in relation to His own.

Of course, but "the Lord" would cover the whole of my life.

Quite so.

You draw a distinction between "the Head and the Lord"

To be sure I do.

There is one verse more you may read (12 to 16).

"Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things, put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another, in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord"

Now you see what you derive from the Head. You will come out in quite a new way; all comes from the Head. First, sensibilities, then charity, then "let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts"—then you are called to one body necessarily—and then the word of Christ. These three verses tell you all you get from the Head.

You said "necessarily." Would you explain?

It takes in the whole company.

So this chapter is not individual?

It now becomes collective for the first time. But you learn it individually.

But in view of the assembly?

In view of the whole Christian circle. As someone has said, "He is the Head of all the Gentile family." If you believe the fact that Christ is the Head, a wonderful course will open out to you. He is Head, though

you do not know it. How great a company we should be here to-night if we all had lost our own heads and Christ was our common Head.

Then if I hold the Head, I must take in all the Church of God?

Yes. The body of Christ. J. B. S.

SONGS OF DEGREES.

These songs form an interesting group in the last of the five books of Psalms, comprising those from cxx. to exxxiv. inclusive. The fifth book is prospective of Israel's blessedness, and that of restored creation during the millennium: it is also retrospective of the trials and exercises through which a preserved company in Israel pass, as detailed in the first four books, preparatory to the coming of their Messiah long rejected, and by which they are morally fitted to enjoy the influence of His benign rule. Their moral state at this juncture is exhaustively expressed in the psalm immediately preceding the songs of degrees, Psalm exix., where every link by which God was pleased to connect Himself with Israel (His word, law, statutes, &c.) is laid hold of with delight by the purged remnant.

It will be noticed that the heading common to the fifteen Psalms constitutes them a group; it is an inspired introduction to each, and is literally "A song of the goings up." The remnant of Israel is in fact looked at here as in immediate view of the long-expected consummation, when their re-instatement in the land, their national aspirations, their social con-

dition, moral state, and spiritual instincts, will all harmonize and accord with God's gracious intentions regarding them. All centre in Zion, to which they are, so to speak, going up. The climax of blessing is not yet reached, as may be seen by the first song of the group; but how unclouded are their anticipations in view of it may be seen by the lovely picture presented in the last two

Attention is invited to the moral progress which one perceives, especially in the last five songs; and, while not losing sight of the dispensational aspect of this section of Scripture, the intention is to indicate the manner in which the instruction contained in the songs may be regarded as applying to believers of the present day. They naturally arrange themselves into three sub-groups, viz., the first seven (cxx.-cxxvi.); the next three, and the last five.

The first sub-group depicts the circumstances and privileges of the people of God: surrounded by enemies (exx.), but with assurance of divine protection (exxi.), God's centre and interest theirs (exxii.), He Himself their unfailing resource (exxiii.); His response to their cry (exxiv.), their consequent testimony (exxv.), and grateful joy (exxvi.). The number seven, symbolical of perfection, reminds us that our circumstances, however trying, our spiritual privileges, be they few or many, our soul exercises, and their blessed results, are all of God—all divinely, unerringly, graciously arranged.

The thoughtful mind may discern likewise in the next three Psalms the reward and exercises of a faithful servant, who acts in the consciousness that fruit-bearing and the success and stability of his work are altogether

of God. May we not see in the exercises detailed in Psalm cxxix, something of what the one perfect Servant passed through in His voluntary path of self-sacrificing love? (Isa. xlix, and l.) The last sub-group comprises five psalms. This

number seems symbolical of human weakness, and may indicate the only condition in which a soul may hope to make progress, or to enter into the mind of God. The first verse of Psalm cxxx. is expressive of this condition. When the voice of God reaches souls they are awakened to the solemn sense of having to do with Him. Sooner or later such must feel their deep need in presence of His holiness; and, though perhaps inaudibly, give utterance in His ear to the cry referred to in that verse, "Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord." Well it is to have shared in such an experience; for, as the Psalmist says, "there is forgiveness with Thee." An important distinction is developed in Christian

teaching between judicial forgiveness, which is full, complete, and everlasting; and governmental forgiveness, which restores the believer to the enjoyment of the relationship in which he stands with God. This distinction is not manifest here, but attention is called to a not less significant fact, viz., the sanctifying effect of God's forgiveness when truly known. "There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared," "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil." Dependence on God is now also known (vv. 5, 6),

and, with this, His power, not merely on one's own behalf, but for all the people of God: "With Him is plenteous redemption. And He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities."

Psalm cxxxi, introduces a point which cannot be sur-

passed in importance, corresponding to what Christians know as liberty. "My soul is even as a weaned child." Breaking the human will is what God alone can successfully undertake. Many have, in the various monastic and ascetic systems, attempted the subjugation of their fleshly propensities, only to meet with universal disappointment, and perhaps to end in despair. Some, alas! do not believe how irrevocably the human will is opposed to God, and but few have practically found it to be so. The discovery of this is an immense step. But there is more: that in the quickened soul which delights in the law of God-"the inward man"-is hampered and opposed in its every movement by this depraved will (Rom. vii. 21-23), which serves to show its incorrigible nature, and that the believer must flounder in spiritual bondage until deliverance be realized. To plead constitutional weakness, peculiar training, or lack of privilege, etc., or to be satisfied with what one may suppose to be a measure of improvement, only proves deficiency of light as to one's true condition; whilst to shun more light leaves one at a distance from Him who is Love, as well as Light, and from the grace and blessing which He delights to bestow. Light makes manifest that the carnal mind is enmity against God, but it is blessedly possible to become acquiescent in His will. The Psalmist, for Israel, can say, "My soul is even as a weaned child." How is this to be attained? By death! Even the national restoration of Israel, concurrently with their moral state, as expressed in Psalm cxxxi., is on the principle of life out of death. (Isa. xxvi. 13-19; Ezek. xxxvii.; Rom. xi. 15.) Christ has been in the waters of death, and dried them up for His people, else deliverance could not be known.

Do any feel the worthlessness of their best resolutions, their powerlessness to do good, their innate wickedness? Honest self-judgment discovers to them the depths where He, the blessed Son of God—perfect man—once stood alone, bearing the curse, "made sin" for us, as the only way by which our case could be met,

believer then reckons himself dead to sin, and alive to God in Christ; dead to the law, that he might "be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead." The eye is closed to self and its interests, the heart

and sin removed from before the eye of God. The

becomes insensible to its claims, being fixed on, and controlled by, a new object, and life is found in Christ, in a new sphere, of which He is the glorious centre.

Notice again the moral order in Psalm exxxii. The

Notice again the moral order in Psalm exxxii. The will being subject, David is introduced as seeking, in this ardent way, something for God—that which God Himself desired—"a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob." Here is a beautiful example of communion, a privilege which surely the Christian is entitled to enjoy in the highest way; but one which is impossible where self is still the object and has not been displaced.

Christendom in one way or another asserts the false principle of "a right to choose where, and how, we are to worship"; but even the psalm exposes the erroneous nature of this pretension. David secks, but it is for God to choose, where He would dwell. (Compare verses 5 and 13.) The thought of choosing in these things implies the exercise of will, just what God would set aside in His people. Seeking is wholesome exercise, and a sign of reality in this age of indifference; but finding may cost us much. It was so with David, who

had to wade through the deep waters of three days' pestilence on account of his pride of regal power, before he found the site for God's temple, and even then it was only under the hand of mercy which stayed the Lord's sword of destruction, and by the altar of burnt offering, that his eye was divinely opened to perceive it.

How solemn, and yet how gracious! The place of

the Lord's choice affords no standing room for the flesh, but it is the place of richest blessing. Note the abounding grace of God's purpose for David's house-"the sure mercies"-which makes David's heart overflow in 1 Chron, xvii, and in Psalm lxxxix. He was raised up entirely of God, after Israel had failed in every species of privilege, and sure mercies, based on resurrection (Acts xiii. 34), were secured to Israel and centred in Zion. (Psalm cxxxii, 11-14.) Here nothing could be alienated, and Israel, too, could learn abounding grace. If the Psalmist prays, "Let thy priests be clothed with rightcousness," the answer is, "I will also clothe her priests with salvation." If he prays again, "Let thy saints shout for joy," the answer goes forth, "Her saints shall shout aloud for joy." And in addition, "I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread," reminding us of the apostle's words, "Exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think."

Prior to the building of the temple, tabernacle-worship was carried on at Gibeon by the priesthood of the Aaronic order, while the ark was at Zion—God's chosen centre, His "rest for ever"—Asaph and his brethren, the singers, ministering before it. What a deeply significant bearing all this has upon God's

highly privileged saints of the present day! Do we know His centre-spiritually, His "rest for ever"where He dwells, awaiting the establishment in His own time of temple-worship in Israel, a place characterized by divinely ordered and acceptable praise, where the blessed Antitype of the ark abides, the oncerejected King? "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Thrice hallowed spot!

Here unity, according to God, amongst brethren is realized, and its beauty manifested before His appreciativé eye, for it is He Himself who extols it. (Psalm exxxiii.) Coming where this psalm does in a group which presents moral order of apprehension, we may say that for a realization of this unity, souls should be laid hold of practically by what precedes. The unity spoken of is the counterpart for Israel in the millennium of the unity of the Spirit amongst Christians now, known when souls are in the power of the truth which characterizes the dispensation. (Eph. iv. 1-6.) It is also very significant that it is at this point (Psalm cxxxiii. to end) that "life for evermore" is referred to. Eternal life as ministered to Christians supposes a condition of soul in accordance with "the true light" which "now shineth." To "know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" is indeed eternal life, nothing beyond it in glory!

And now unobstructed praise flows forth (cxxxiv.); songs even "in the night"-acceptable praise to God in the sanctuary; blessing flowing forth from God's centre, Zion, according to the prayer of, and thus through, those in communion with Him. (Compare 1 Peter ii. 5 and 9.)

J. K.

SCRIPTURE NOTES.

T

2 Kings iii. 20.

It is of the deepest import to notice that the water of which Elisha had prophesied came "when the meatoffering was offered." A parallel case may help to explain it. When the Philistines came up against Israel in the days of Samuel, the children of Israel entreated the prophet to cry unto the Lord their God that He would save them out of the hand of the Philistines. "Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a burnt offering wholly unto the Lord: and Samuel cried unto the Lord for Israel; and the Lord heard him." Then we read, that "as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel: but the Lord thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them." (1 Samuel vii. 7-10.) Now both the meat and the burnt offering, set forth different aspects of Christ: the former of His entire devotedness to God, proved and tested in manifold ways all through His life up to, and including, His death; the latter His perfect devotedness to the glory of God in death, at all costs, so to speak, inasmuch as He was showing forth His obedience in a new way and under new conditions -in the place of sin, and as made sin. The lesson therefore in both cases-in that of Samuel, and in that of Elisha-is that whenever God meets the need of His people, whether it be to succour them out of the hand of their enemies, or to turn the dry land into springs of water, it is in virtue of what Christ is before Him and what He has wrought. The difference in the respective offerings represents varying appreciations of Christ. Samuel's offering was neither a bullock nor a sheep (see Leviticus i.)—only a sucking lamb, but still Christ was prefigured. The offering in the camp of the three kings was but a meat-offering, stopping short of

the sacrificial nature of the death of Christ, and of God being glorified by it. Yet it was Christ presented before God; and God, blessed be His name, acts for His people, not according to their apprehensions, but according to His own estimate of the preciousness of Christ and of His sacrifice. This is all our comfort and encouragement, that we can be before God in all the efficacy of Christ as understood by God Himself. II. 2 Cor. xi. 14: 1 Peter v. 8. In the context of these two scriptures will be found the means of interpreting aright these different aspects of Satan's activity. It is evident that Paul had to contend with false teachers in the church at Corinth, with men who claimed also to be apostles (v. 13) and ministers of Christ. (v. 23.) They were probably Judaizers (v. 22), and on that very account would claim to be possessed of larger light, and, it may be,

with men who claimed also to be apostles (v. 13) and ministers of Christ. (v. 23.) They were probably Judaizers (v. 22), and on that very account would claim to be possessed of larger light, and, it may be, of a deeper spirituality. Thus they might beguile and lead astray simple souls. The apostle in this chapter strips off their mask, and, exposing their real character, designates them "false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ." He then morally identifies them with Satan (compare John viii. 44), and points out that they were but imitating Satan, who "himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore," he adds, "it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of right-

eousness." This kind of activity on the part of Satan, acting through those who claimed to be teachers, partakes, it will be perceived, of the nature of a wile, as his object is not to terrify, but to deceive and entice the people of God. But in Peter, discovered to us as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, Satan is seen as stirring up persecution, inspiring the worldpowers, it may be, with determined hostility to Christians, and with the resolution to exterminate them from the face of the earth. Traces of persecution indeed are found all through his first epistle. (Chap. i. 6, 7; iii. 14-16; iv. 12-19.) Such are the two forms of Satan's opposition to Christ and His people. As with the blessed Lord Himself, Satan sought first to allure Him in the temptation in the wilderness, and then, having failed, banded together every class of the people in order to destroy Him, so with the saints. Satan will if possible seduce them, but if he cannot succeed in this way, he will, in order to terrify and to drive them from Christ, make them pass through the hottest fires of persecution he can kindle.

Π.

Jони xiv. 13, 14; xvi. 23, 24.

WE cannot conceive of any limitation of these wonderful scriptures. It is quite true that they were spoken to the eleven disciples, and that parts of these chapters have a special application to themselves, as, for example, chapter xv. 16, 20, 21, 27, but every believer is in view when the Lord speaks of asking of the Father in His name. Indeed verse 12 shows, however it might have been first fulfilled in the experience of the apostles, that it widens out from them and includes all servants, if not all believers. It is, "he

that hath my commandments, and keepeth them."

This surely opens the door for all who are enabled through grace to answer to the conditions." Doubtless it is "ye" in our scriptures, but even so it is "ye" as representative, and we therefore hold that the Lord, speaking here as the Son, accords the unspeakable privilege to every believer of appearing before the Father in His name. What then is involved in this? First and foremost, condition of soul; for it would be impossible to ask of the Father anything in the Son's name unless in communion with His own mind, with His own desires, objects, and interests. This presupposed, it teaches likewise that, when the believer thus approaches the Father, he appears there by the warrant and authority of the Son, and consequently in the Son's place, and with all the claim of the Son upon the Father's heart, with all the claim He has upon the Father in virtue of what He is, and in virtue of His having glorified Him on the earth and finished the work which the Father gave Him to do. It really amounts in this way to the same thing as the Son Himself asking of the Father; and if this is understood, the absolute, unconditioned promise-"If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it"-is at once explained. REVELATION V.

Two things must be remembered in the interpretation of the scene; first, that it is in heaven, and, secondly, that it is future. In chapter iv. 1, John is called up to heaven, for as he was now about to be instructed concerning events upon earth he must view them from heaven. Chapters ii, and iii, contain the history of the

church on earth, from the loss of her first love in Ephesus to that nauseous, lukewarm condition in Laodicea, which draws down upon her the irreversible sentence of rejection as God's candlestick on earth, In chapter iv. the twenty-four elders, who certainly include the church, are seated on thrones round about the throne of God. This proves that the church has been caught up from the earth before the opening of the chapter. From this fact, moreover, it may be gathered that chapter v. refers to the period after the rapture of the saints, as described in 1 Thess. iv., and before the appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ. In fact, all the events in the book from chapter iv. to chapter xix. 11 are comprised in the interval between the coming of our blessed Lord for, and His return with, His people. The book with the seven seals is the book of God's purposes for the earth, and we learn from the Lamb, as it had been slain, being the only one able to unloose its seals, that it is He alone in virtue of His death who will make good all that God is in government upon the earth. In His kingdom, which He will establish, He will vindicate God's name, and maintain His authority in the face of the whole universe. The Lamb, as it had been slain, already exalted in heaven, will then be exalted above all in the very scene of His rejection. It follows that the adoration of the elders, the ascriptions of the myriads of angels, and the burst of praise from every thing that hath breath, are all future. So far, heaven has never yet heard the songs of the redeemed, excepting from the saints on earth, and hence in the worship of the saints eternity and its eternal occupation are anticipated.

READINGS AT CROYDON.

VI.—Union with Christ and the Result.

EPHESIANS ii. 1-6.

Our subject this evening is union with Christ and the result of union. We start with the fact that everyone is united, though everyone does not know it. Every Christian who has received the Spirit of God is united to Christ. "Now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him." We cannot alter our position, though we all do not know it. The epistle to the Ephesians was written that you may know it. Some are not looking for conscious union, because they think that there will be no union till the ceremony takes place, namely, the marriage of the Lamb. (Rev. xix.) You are not a confidential servant if you do not know union with Christ.

Do you connect the knowledge of union with the Head?

You never understand union if you do not hold the Head. It is remarkable that when the truth was recovered, Mr. Darby woke up to the fact,—I have a Head in heaven; and if I have a Head in heaven, every Christian has the same Head in heaven; and one Head involves one body. That is how he got it. He began with the Head, not with the House. This is important, because the House is in ruins, the body is not.

Then you would connect union with our subject last evening?

Certainly. I think if you do not hold the Head you cannot understand the unity of the Spirit. My foot moves to the spot that my head indicates.

Does union now go beyond the body? That is, that we are united to Christ as Head and to one another by the Spirit?

You will find that it is by the Spirit you are brought

into union. The difference between this and Colossians is, it is life in Colossians, not the power of the Spirit as it is here.

I was thinking, with regard to the marriage of the Lamb, would that be union in another form?

The Bride will be in heaven before the marriage takes place. It is to establish her position before she comes with Christ to reign. In all the types there is nothing said about the ceremony. All the types refer to her place here on earth. Take Abigail. She is the wife of Nabal, and she ministers of his substance to the rejected king. That is the last type of the Bride. In the last churches of the Revelation it is occupied with the kingdom. Laodicea gets the lowest place. The youngest believer will get a place on the throne.

So reigning is beyond sitting on the throne?

To be sure it is. Philadelphia goes immensely beyond that. The first great thing is that there is union. The first fourteen verses of Ephesians i. is FITNESS. It is individual. That is the first point—you must be fit. I think the great lack of souls is fitness. You are not ready for union if you have not fitness.

Fitness for what?

Fitness for the Bridegroom. It is not salvation, but it is fitness. The type will make it plain. The only

You must be of His kindred. The flesh is not of Christ's kindred. It is very beautiful to see how he found out her kindred. How did he find it out?

He asked the Lord that he might find her by her grace—the steward finds out her kindred by her grace. Many would have said, "I shall be very happy to give

you a drink of water"; but she says, "I will give your camels drink also." It was grace. "Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers." Therefore, I say, that though every Christian is united to Christ, I do not think every Christian is fit for conscious union, ready to be conducted to where Isaac is. There is no knowledge of union till you come to the Person.

You have already said we are united. You are speaking now of the conscious enjoyment of it? Yes. You are to have the conscious enjoyment of it.

Do you agree that every Christian is not ready for the conscious enjoyment of it?

Oh, quite! The great thing is fitness. You are of the same

stock. You do not get union in Hebrews, but fitness for companionship. You are His brother. You cannot speak of Christ's brethren sinning. I believe some would like the divine nature to sin sometimes, because they do not like to think it is the old man. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin." The flesh and the Spirit are distinct, and when one is in the ascendant the other is not.

Then do you mean that being conducted to Isaac is farther than fitness?

Yes. You are not ready to be conducted until you have fitness. The steward delivers his message; he wants to conduct Rebekah to Isaac.

Now from verse 15 to the end is the counsel of God. Here you are ready to go. Verse 19 is "that ye may know [conscious knowledge] . . . what is the exceeding greatness of His power." We all were raised up together, but we do not all know it. I remember Mr. Darby used to say, Christ would not be complete without His body. I used to mutter to myself, He would be complete without anything. Who was right, he or I? He was. I imagined that the body was an addition to Him; but no, it came from Him. It is no addition, it is a development. We all come from Himself. This is the secret of God. A great many who are well up in Ephesians do not understand God's counsel. Someone has said it is not only that you have to be enlightened, but you have to get the "spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him"

You began with the knowledge of Him.

before you are enlightened.

Exactly. But if you have not a conception of God's mind you will never take in Ephesians. It is not studying Ephesians that will do it. Suppose I was talking to a builder about a building, he would say—"I could do it if I knew the plan. I have bricks and timber in plenty, and good workmen, but I do not understand the plan." Nothing but the "spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him" can give you an idea of the plan.

Do I understand you that as a preliminary to our understanding Ephesians we must have the "spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him"?

Yes.

What is the plan?

You must get the "spirit of wisdom and revelation," and then you will find out the plan. You will be a good architect. You will comprehend God's mind.

Can anyone form a conception of the mass of people required to form the complement to Christ?

It includes all the saints; the weakest is necessary.

I do not understand the Church coming out of Him.

If His body does not come from Himself where does it come from? Where did Eve come from?

Out of Adam.

There you have it. Of whose flesh is His body?
Do you mean of His origin?

Yes; you are of Him. Either He is of you, or you are of Him. We read, "Both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one." Put a noun to "one" and you limit it. Therefore Abraham's servant was sworn as to kindred. Souls must first learn that they are of one kindred with Christ. He is not your "elder brother," as is sometimes said, but through grace you are His brother, and that makes a very great difference.

Now that we have seen our fitness, and have apprehended the counsel of God, we will turn to the passage read, and there we get the realization of union. You are raised up together, and made to sit together. You must come to Him, like Rebekah. She was conducted all the way to Isaac, and then there is the realisation of union. I do not say the journey was accomplished in a minute. She had to encounter two great obstacles. Nine-tenths of saints, though true, are stopped by the

first hindrance—family influence. Rebekah's family proposed that she should remain "ten days." The steward said, "Hinder me not." Rebekah was called, and she said, "I will go." She is decided now. There is great decision—purpose of heart before you will be conducted to Him.

God's purpose for us is the greatest distinction ever vouchsafed to any, even that every believer now should be united to Christ in heaven, and should realise it now while on the earth. In all the types we find the Bride a comfort in a day of trial.

Then the Church ministers to the heart of Christ?

Quite so. Next, consequent on decision, having overcome family influence (nothing baulks a man like family influence), you have to encounter another obstacle. Rebekah had to go through the wilderness to get to Isaac. Every step she took in the wilderness was a step away from her family. There is no way to heaven but through the wilderness. She did not realise union until she saw Isaac. Now she is united to him. Now that we have come as far as realisation, you

might read from the 14th verse of chapter iii., "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto Him

that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the Church by Jesus Christ throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

Well, there you have what I may call the endowment; that is, your gain from union. I heard a man once say that the youngest believer could understand this. Surely he had no conception of the magnitude of the truth here. There are three great things which no one can know until he is united to Christ.

What are they?

The first, "That the Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." This is not the same as Christ living in you. You have now a new set of interests. There is in your hearts by faith "the Christ"—all His. You never saw a good wife yet whose individuality was not merged in her husband.

Would you say a word about the Christ?

It means, all that belongs to Him.

Himself and His interests?

But they are one. God never separates the body from the Head.

You take it then to be "the Christ" of God's counsels?

Quite so. Now it is by the power of the Spirit, who has conducted you into the realisation of union, like Rebekah coming to Isaac, that your individuality is merged in Christ. You have a new circle of interests. Next, you are made acquainted with the scope of His glory. "The breadth and length and depth and height." Thirdly, that you may know His love which passeth knowledge. Now you are to know

it. No one ever knows what is the fulness of Christ's love until he knows union. Do you understand me?

Yes; I think you mean that there is no question here of the love of Christ in salvation, but you know His love when you realise union. Is it the truth that the Holy Spirit conducts me to Christ where He is?

Yes. You could not know union otherwise. Now you are enjoying the good of it—the endowment. We know in the type it was on earth, but now the Spirit of God conducts the soul to where He is.

Certainly. How could you know union if you were not where He is? If you had the sense of union, you would have the sense of being "in His pavilion free from the strife of tongues."

What you said about being outside of man.

Here it is outside of the world. Christ has gone to another place. Many would read "heavenly things" here, but no, it is a place.

In a word, What are the three things? The endowment?

First, His interests are your interests. Next, the scope of His glory occupies your vision; and lastly, the knowledge of His love crowns all. You are filled "into [not with] all the fulness of God." The more I know the love of Christ the better I know Christ.

Would you say that you cannot apprehend the love of Christ unless Christ is dwelling in your heart by faith?

I think the order is; first, the Christ dwelling in your heart by faith. Rebekah first lost her individuality because of Isaac, then she could survey his property, and she knew his love. But inasmuch as this follows upon union, why did the apostle pray for it?

He prayed that the Spirit might work, and that He might give the endowment. They could not be entitled to it otherwise.

Is the Christ dwelling in your heart continuous?

Yes. It is by faith you have it.

If faith is in exercise?

Yes. Christ lives in you by the grace of God for your own comfort. Here it is the calling of the saints—"your hearts." It is plural.

Then it is not individual?

No. It is collective, though known individually.

I think it is important to see that, because some consider that it refers to your individual state.

It is only consequent on union. Now you can understand how a believer united to Christ is endowed. Christ's interests are yours, the scope of His glory is your scope, and you know His love.

What answers now to Rebekah's crossing the wilderness?

No one gets to heaven without realising that this world is a wilderness. Are you ready for it?

When?

At any time. She had to break with her family and to travel through the wilderness unto Isaac.

You mean, "in spirit there already?"

Yes, you come to that; but I say that if you do not accept the wilderness, you will not get to heaven—while here.

Then domestic happiness might be a great hindrance at times?

In one way, but not in another.

I mean to the realisation of the wilderness.

If you are contenting yourself with any natural blessing you have not accepted the wilderness. When you make too much of anything here you are hindered by it. But as you accept the wilderness you will find nothing here.

"A dry and thirsty land where no water is?"

Yes.

"This world is a wilderness wide,
I have nothing to seek or to choose."

I can say that much, but the next lines embrace more.

"No thought in the waste to abide,
I have nought to regret nor to lose."

You can sing it as desiring it?

Are we up to it?

Do we not know joy until we realise heaven? Is there none in the wilderness?

The moment you have Christ formed in you you have joy. "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice." "Joy unspeakable, and full of glory," is not union. Union realised is that you belong to Christ, and when you know that, you will come out in quite a new way. The one who knows union with Christ, though once active in natural things, will now have a new set of interests, and will come out in a new way.

Would such an one realise crossing the desert? You wish to bring before us what we should by grace do.

Yes; you never can get to heaven without accepting the desert. You must break with your family and also with the world. That is, the "young man" who has "overcome the wicked one" (1 John ii.) has to overcome the world.

The general interpretation is that we are all on the way.

Exactly, and that when you come to Jordan you

"Stand shivering on the brink, And fear to launch away!"

It is making it gospel that has hindered the perception of this chapter.

Quite true. But it is not the gospel.

It is only the Spirit who can make this world a wilderness?

Naturally, we are looking for something to suit us in it. We have to learn that there is not a green thing in all the land of Egypt. Look at Paul and John. Where did they end their days? In some happy retreat? No. One in prison, and the other in exile. That is a great help to me, because as you are here for Christ natural things do not improve, and yet you never were happier.

If we are in the right place I suppose?

Yes. Would you like to be there?

Would you say, What is the object of the Church?

That is the next step. Read verse 20 again.

"Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end."

There is your answer. The church is to be always the display of Christ to the glory of God.

"According to the power that worketh in us." Is that resurrection power?

The power that raised up Christ. The same power

that raised up the bird, so to speak, raised up every feather in the bird. That is our comfort!

Now you come to chapter iv., and there are two great circles of testimony. One is the church, and the other your own family.

The first circle is the church?

Yes. If a man does not behave well in the church, he never will in his own family. You must begin at the top; it is a great mistake to begin at the bottom. Men try to work from man to God. Work from God down, and you will soon see where you are.

Now in the first circle the great thing is "till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ"—a full-grown man.

It is simply the object of the ministry?

Yes. You have not done your work until you bring every saint to that. The gifts are given for that purpose. This we see in a remarkable way in John xv. 26. The Holy Ghost was to be sent to the disciples to testify of Christ—"He shall testify of Me." Then we get "ye" afterwards—"Ye also shall bear witness."

That refers to the twelve. That was only up to the resurrection.

The other applies to us all.

Yes; the testimony of the heavenly Man. It is Ephesian ground. We should be descriptive of the exalted Man at God's right hand; you a part and I a part. It is the calling of the whole body.

Is that the ministration of the mystery?

It would come out that way. This testimony of

Christ (see John xvi.) would be very effective. The brethren at first gave up their position in the world in order to be in this testimony. No man holding a position in this world can be a witness of Christ exalted. It is possible to be a servant, but not a witness.

What do you mean by a position in this world?

Any recognized position. A postman's badge will

Any recognized position. A postman's badge will not help him to be a witness of Christ.

To receive a testimony from the world would destroy your testimony of Christ?

Yes; surely such an one could not be a witness of Christ because he has a position in the world. Do you understand me? Do you agree?

I do indeed,

Well, next, the heavenly man is to be described in your own family. You get nothing about your family under law. I have not seen many fathers who have brought up their own children. Some allege that because of circumstances they could not do so. The Scripture makes no exception, and therefore I cannot.

You have to state the truth.

You would not get this information under the law. Now that you are united to Christ in heaven you are able to carry out every ordinance of God in the fullest way. Under the law you only get, "Children, obey your parents."

The heavenly man would not delegate it?

He would keep his children under his own eye.

But if man and wife are one, could you not delegate them to her?

Scripture does not tell the mother to bring them up, because she would naturally do so. The fathers are responsible.

There is one subject more, and that is in chapter vi. Read verses 10-13

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

Now you see that in the circle of testimony we have to confront the combined force of Satan. If you seek an easy life on earth you will not touch the heavenly side of truth.

But it would not be good to seek that?

No, certainly not. If you suffer with Christ you will reign with Him; and if you do not realise union with Him you are not a confidential servant. I might say to a civil engineer, Can you do that work? Yes, he would reply, if the money is forthcoming. If you are in the power of the heavenly Man you can overcome everything. Difficulties are only opportunities to display the power of Christ. You may have seen a child cry at a fly. But by-and-by he gets power, and he kills the fly. The difficulty has vanished. Some think that because they are interested in this scripture they are experimentally in it. There are, I should say, but few who know this conflict. You lose the power of scripture if you misapply it. Here you encounter the full force of Satan. Satan has worked up man to cast Christ out of this world, and now he cannot tolerate that anyone should be descriptive of Him here as the exalted Man. Satan always throws something in your way to allure you from the heavenly path.

Do you make a distinction between the power of the enemy and his wiles?

Yes; I think he begins by wiles. If he can get you into a bye-path he is satisfied. It is well to remember your history, what you did, and how you got turned off, and how you came back again.

Only histories never tell you how you got turned off. As a rule they always recount the best things. But

we read, "Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee," and when you look back there is enough to cast you down—how you have been hindered and turned aside. Satan has only two barrels to his gun. He will allure you if he can, and if that will not do he will try the other, that is, he will crush you. With the blessed Lord, he came to allure Him, and then in Gethsemane he came to crush Him. If you refuse the allurement which Satan throws in your way, so surely will he subject you to persecution. As was said to Mr. Darby, "You would not mind if the newspapers abused you, but for God's people to disparage you, that is very painful."

It is a great mercy we always have the power of God.

You will never enjoy it until you know union with Christ.

What is "as thy days, so shall thy strength be"?

That is where you put yourself.

How does "crushing" come to us now?

By persecution. If you step out as a heavenly man, the first thing will be Satan will throw something in your way to allure you, and if you do not take the bait, he will subject you to the opposition and enmity of even Christians.

It will not take a moment, if you would just go over the headings to gather it together.

Fitness, counsel, realization, endowment, result in the Church, testimony, and opposition—conflict with the enemy.

J. B. S.

THE INTERCESSION OF CHRIST.

SINCE Christ is now on high, communion with Him is as to His things there. Communion of our souls in heavenly things is continually liable to disturbance and interruption while we are on earth. The intercession of Christ is God's gracious provision for its continuance, or, if lost, for its restoration. It is always going on as priesthood or as advocacy. It comes before us in John xiii. under the figure the Lord uses of washing the disciples' feet. It is exercised either for actual sin, or for our infirmities. In the one case it is advocacy (1 John ii.), in the other (Hebrews) it is priesthood.

When the Lord's intercession is for me in my infirmities (not sins) down here, the way it works in me is that I am kept unconscious of them, and thus able to enter into heavenly things. And the way in which intercession (advocacy for some actual sin committed) works in me is, that by the Spirit I am made conscious of it (the sin), and by the Spirit I am also led to judge and confess it. The next step is, I am made conscious that it is forgiven.

Intercession is the generic term, but it may be either advocacy, or priesthood. Its object in both cases is to make communion with the Lord as to heavenly things the abiding enjoyment of the soul. How great is this grace!

H. C. A.

THE MIXED MULTITUDE AND ISRAEL'S THREE CHARACTERISTICS.

Exodus xii, 37-42.

"AND a mixed multitude went up also with them." (v. 38.) It is impossible to ignore the presence and importance of this company as a typical people, both in the aspect of their own position and responsibility, as well as constituting a very real source of danger and entanglement to the people of God. Unsheltered by the blood, as not belonging to the nation, without any vital interest in the people themselves, the purposes of Jehovah concerning them, or the land to which the nation was bound, their whole position formed a contrast to that of the redeemed company, among whom, however, they cast in their lot and "went up with them."

It is not difficult to recognise the counterpart of this "mixed multitude" in that vast professing company, unsheltered by the blood of Christ, without personal interest in God's redemption, or future prospect in any way connected with the Lord's people, but yet identifying themselves because of some present and personal advantage with them.

The vast profession of Christendom with which we are surrounded, overshadows and includes the two companies typically represented by redeemed Israel and the "mixed multitude"; and the intermingling is so complete, that the distinct identity of each is lost: as this latter company was marked alone by the facts that

they "went up also with Israel," so of their modern counterpart, who are identified by the same special characteristic. If personally enquired of, they know nothing of shelter by the blood of the Lamb from God as a Judge, of His word as furnishing them with security and confidence, of resources in Him for the wilderness, of a pilgrim spirit and pilgrim character by the way, of the place towards which God's own redeemed are journeying. They are only where they are, because the profession of Christianity is that by which they are best served.

A truly solemn picture of the mass. Dear reader, let me earnestly urge you to look to it that you are not, as a professing Christian for years, one of this company; for should the separating event of the rapture of the redeemed actually take place in your lifetime, though you may have passed muster among your fellow-creatures as a Christian up to that solemn but fast approaching moment, you will be then and there unmasked, by being left behind, to be rapidly followed by irreclaimable apostasy and judgment. (2 Thess. ii. 10-12.) Or should death intervene for you, though possibly not unmasked even then, you will be at the great white throne; for while not one mere professor will be found amongst the company caught up, not one will be missing among the company brought up before that solemn sessional throne for judgment.

But this "mixed multitude" constituted further a standing snare and danger to the people of God, as will be clear by a reference to Numbers xi. 4-6, where it is said of them that "they fell a lusting"; the effect of their influence upon Israel being that they became speedily leavened by the fleshly spirit, which was mani-

festing itself amongst them. "And the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember," &c. It is thus with the Lord's people in the present day, the professing but entirely worldly element in their midst perpetually recalling and reviving the tastes, delights, and desires of the Egypt, which, according to God's thoughts, and their own redeemed condition, they have left; awakening and ceaselessly perpetuating the interests and lusts that the natural man, in the believer, is ever prone to turn to; thus inviting and insuring the governmental dealings in discipline of a Holy God, jealous of the love and affections of his own, founded on the ever present ground of known redemption and sovereign grace. (Numbers xi. 33.) "While the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the Lord

was kindled against the people, and the Lord smote

them."

This ceaseless subtle influence for evil, and a harvest of sorrow, may, alas! lurk in the person of one of "the mixed multitude," in the very homes of the people of God; the leaven and lust of the world and worldliness may be nursed and fostered with assiduous care by the nearest and dearest; much grace indeed is needed, and blessedly available too, to meet and repel the approach and advances of the world spirit from such a subtle quarter. Let young Christians beware and accept a faithful because scriptural warning as to the first assaults of alluring worldliness, through the medium of the affections and natural relationships; remembering that it was owing to the influence and intimacy of a Delilah that Samson was drawn aside from the path of Nazariteship, ending a career, that opened bright with

the promise of energetic testimony for Jehovah, and separation from the world, in a condition of sorrowful and disciplinary humiliation.

In verses 39-42 we have three very striking charac-

teristics of the truly redeemed ones, in contrast to "the mixed multitude"; of the former it is recorded (v. 39) that "they were thrust out" (v. 41), they "went out." (v. 42). "It is a night to be much observed unto the Lord for bringing them out." In this threefold character, which belonged equally to the whole company, they are presented to us. First, as those whom the Egyptians could no longer tolerate on the ground of their being the channel of God's most solemn dealings with their consciences, up to the point of the judgment of death, so "they were urgent upon the people that they might send them out of the land in haste, for they said, we be all dead men." Secondly, pressed by the sense of the cruel bondage they had been in, out of which the door of escape now lay wide open before them, they "went out" of their own voluntary will in glad liberty. Thirdly, with their hearts bowed before Jehovah on account of this marvellous intervention in grace, on their behalf, on that night "to be much observed to the Lord," they are under the immediate sense of His grace and power in "bringing them out from the land of Egypt." Is it not in this threefold character that the redeemed

Is it not in this threefold character that the redeemed ones of the present dispensation are called to appear? First, as the channels of God's dealings with the conscience of the world, and, if faithful in this first characteristic, as little tolerated by the world of this day, as the Egyptians of that; bearing the testimony of the judgment of death, as the sentence under which

a guilty world lies, and as such "thrust out" from their company; and truly where this faithfulness in following in the footsteps of the Master, who did not hesitate to say, "Now is the judgment of this world," is found, the world's rejection surely follows, for "if ye were of the world the world would love his own, but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." "Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord." (John xv. 19, 20.) Secondly, under the experimental consciousness of Egypt's cruel bondage, of the deliverance from the scene of sorrows, exercises and afflictions, imposed by the oppressor, into a scene of liberty and blessing, the believer willingly goes out; also pressed by the bitter memory of "the famine," "the want" and the husks. Having turned his back upon the "far country" once, he presses forward with earnest consent toward home and heaven; by that he is henceforth characterised. Thirdly, in the full and unclouded apprehension of "the grace of God that bringeth salvation"; in the deep enjoyment of the inexhaustible well spring of the love of God, who "commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us"; who has redeemed us "with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot," the believer rests in that marvellous combination of Divine Wisdom, Love, and Power, by means of which he is intelligently conscious that he has been "brought out" from the world of judgment, and can count upon the full resources of that same God of grace to sustain him, all through the years of his pilgrimage.

It is to be noted that the lacking of one or more of

330

these characteristics indicates defective testimony. God looks for the threefold character of faithfulness to the world, departure from the world, and the abiding sense of grace in those whom He has redeemed.

M. C. G.

MARY.

Luke x. 38-42; John xi. xii.

SHE sat, withdrawn at Jesus' feet:
Was with Him in His own retreat:

Himself beheld and heard.
Thus learnt what He came forth to do,
The Father's Holy One and True,
The Everlasting Word.

'One thing is needful.' Mary's heart
Chose out the Good eternal part:
She hung upon His voice,
And He, her Saviour, Guardian, Friend,
Taught her His pathway to attend;
Confirming thus her choice.

He bid her live what He had said;
Bid storm-clouds gather o'er her head.

The Lord!... Where is He now?
Far, far from sight. To Mary, near.
Her Lazarus to Him so dear,

That Death His frame must bow.

'Beyond the Jordan' Jesus passed;

There dwelt, to come again, at last,

Where God would make Him room.

He listened to the mourner's sigh.

God's glory shone in His reply:

'God's Son requires the "tomb."

Death shadows Bethany. But still
For Mary, in the Father's will
Is solace, as before.

'He knoweth all.' 'He loveth well.'

'Earth's many waters rise and swell.'

'God reigneth evermore.'

And Jesus cometh! Martha's haste

His own thrice precious words may waste,
All lost they seem to be.

But see—those pearls are strung again

By Love's own fingers, and remain

Faith's priceless legacy.

And Mary, 'quickly,' at the call,
'He calls thee,' rose. Arose to fall;
Falls down His feet beside.
She came to Jesus, saw Him, wept—
'Hadst Thou been here, Lord, ere he slept,
My brother had not died.'

'Where have ye laid him? 'Jesus wept.'
He who the keys of Hadès kept,
Since first death came by sin;
He who, by agony and blood,
Would bear, alone, the wrath of God,
Spoil death, destroy its sting.

'Father, I thank Thee,' Jesus said. Then, speaking to awake the dead, With mighty voice He cried332

'Come forth,' and Lazarus, the same Who saw corruption, called by name, Came, with Him to abide.

Nor quickened only. Raised, released,
He sits with Christ, shares thus the Feast;
Is with Him in His fame.
But Mary, having felt what woe
Attends the Sent One's path below,
Bears witness to His Name.

The House is with one fragrance filled,
From God's most costly Plant distilled,
Through grace to Mary given.
She pours the spikenard on "His Feet,"
So beautiful to God! so meet
To traverse earth, and heaven!

H. K. B. E.

1870. (Revised since.)

"In every respect God is for us. Precious truth! He has given His own Son; He will give us all things. He Himself has justified us. Who will condemn us? And nothing can separate us from the love thus proved. All that is against us on the road to the glory cannot, as being of the creature, be greater than He who is Lord of all. God is for us in Christ, who has overcome all. The proof of this love is found not only in the path He trod as Man to be able to suffer, and as God in order to reveal perfect love in the suffering; but, following Him in this path, we also experience His love. Nothing can separate us from it."